Journey to Peridëis

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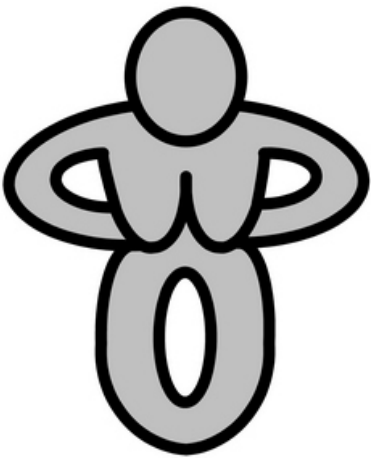

Novel, to be read with one hand[1]

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1 See: Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Confessions. Privately printed MDCCCXCVI (1896), Volume I., p. 38: "... those dangerous books which a fine lady finds inconvenient because they can only be read with one hand."

Sleep, My Dearest, And Seek Thy Rest,
Follow The Lure Of Burning Desires.
Taste The Pleasures Of The Tender Breast
And Know No Bounds.

Text: Picander
Music: Johann Sebastian Bach
(Later adapted for the Christmas Oratorio)[2]

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2 The "official" English translation says heart instead of breast and is otherwise weakened. And: the goddess who woos Hercules is called "Wollust" in German, not just "pleasure" as in the English translation. "Wollust" in German means far more than just pleasure, voluptuousness describes the word better.
The German original text: Schlafe, mein Liebster / und pflege der Ruh / Folge der Lockung / entbrannter Gedanken. / Schmecke die Lust / Der lüsternen Brust / Und erkenne / keine Schranken.

Everybody may be blessed in his own way.
But me too.

(My neighbor)

Alisha

Alisha hurriedly tore off her shirt, let her skirt slide to the ground, and slipped out of her underwear. Then, now completely naked, she took a step toward the rock drawing. She held her breath. What she was about to do unnerved her. But then she pulled herself together and took a determined step directly into the rock. For a fraction of a moment, the rock felt as hard as expected, but as she pressed forward resolutely, it suddenly gave way, feeling strangely crackling-electric and simultaneously like a heavy liquid. Alisha slipped into the rock, the rock closed behind her, and no trace remained of what had just happened. Alisha was now safe.

Inside, black ink surged, feeling viscous as she moved and causing Alisha to sway as if she were on a ship. But she could breathe. Alisha swam through the surging ink until it finally became translucent, and the outlines of a brightly lit destination became visible. Alisha emerged from the viscous ink and found that she was completely dry, the ink having left no traces on her, and behind her was a perfectly innocuous wall niche. Astonished, Alisha touched the wall and noticed that her hand disappeared into it. You can go back, too, Alisha realized with relief. The wall niche she stood in was like a freestanding monument in the space, reminiscent of a bricked-up door or window, the wall made of rough, unfired bricks and the frame carefully crafted from blue-glazed stones with a pointed arch at the top, meticulously built from red bricks. Alisha turned around and, for the first time, consciously looked at the space before her.
A stunned cry escaped Alisha. She was standing in a gigantic Gothic cathedral structure made of red brick, framing white walls. Pointed arch after pointed arch stretched above her into infinity, each supported by a column every ten meters, all identical. The floor beneath her was also laid with red brick, in which, at regular intervals, a stylized woman, laid in yellow brick, thrust her breasts toward the viewer. The simplicity of this structure was, for Alisha, beauty beyond compare.

From afar, Alisha heard a song, but strangely rhythmic, not solemn and slow as one might expect in a cathedral setting:

What are you ...
who are you really?
when freed from burden and constraint?

What is pure?
What is honest?
What is great holiness?

You are a spirit,
yet also a body,
Embrace their unity.

Let coverings fall,
savor what's within,
reveal it and be ready.

Receive the pleasures
of the breasts
and the womb's unfathomable depth.

And open yourself,
you may receive,
that is now decency, morality.

If you return,
nothing has happened,
Sinlessness!
Sinlessness!
Sinlessness!

Shadowy figures, drifting from the niches and corners of the cathedral, suddenly surrounded Alisha, circling her, dancing, singing—some clad in garish clothing, others completely naked. One of the naked women wrapped her legs around a running, dancing man, drawing his manhood into her womb in rhythm with the song. A shrill scene, shrill figures, and had the dancers not been semi-transparent, Alisha would have been genuinely alarmed.
Alisha's gaze fell again on the floor's design, and at the sight of the woman thrusting her breasts toward the viewer, it hit her like a bolt—Tim's words and the fact that he still had to wait outside.
Instantly, the dancing figures vanished, and Alisha was alone in the cathedral

once more. She quickly looked around. There! About two or three hundred meters ahead, between the columns, something caught her eye! Alisha sprinted forward. She saw a large water basin framed by red brick and, perhaps ten meters beyond, something elevated—a table or altar, about two meters long, a meter wide, and a meter high. Its surface was entirely covered with red brick, edged with rounded red brick. The sides were white, and in the center, again in red brick, was the stylized woman, offering her breasts to the viewer.

Without hesitation, Alisha threw herself into the water. After the unbearable heat of the desert, it was pleasantly cool. Still underwater, she wrung out her hair to free it from the zone's dust, and upon surfacing, she ran her hands over every exposed and hidden part of her body, washing herself as thoroughly and systematically as she could manage quickly. She took no time to savor it, too consumed with worry for Tim, who could only follow once she was done here.

With wet hair and a dripping body, Alisha approached the table or altar or whatever it might be. For a moment, she hesitated, but then she climbed onto the table; her wetness seemed inconsequential in this context.

Alisha sat on the altar table, stretched out her legs, and finally lay down completely. Like a sacrifice in a temple, she thought fleetingly. Then a pleasant warmth enveloped her, and her senses began to fade. If someone comes now, they could do whatever they want with me, was her last thought before the cathedral vanished.

ω ω ω

Alisha's consciousness may have slipped away, but only for the briefest moment. When she tried to open her eyes, she found she couldn't. No matter how hard she tried, her eyes stayed shut. A slight panic rose within her, and she fought to calm herself. Calm and relaxed. She thought of the drawing of the woman offering her breasts to the viewer. And then Alisha felt something happening to her. It was as if she were being completely bound, but not unpleasantly so. The binding grew tighter and tighter until she felt herself lifted. Startled, Alisha opened her eyes—this time it worked—but she saw nothing; it was utterly dark around her. She quickly closed her eyes again. But now she heard something—distant music, much calmer this time, and as she listened, the strange sounds and rhythms felt oddly familiar. The peculiar electric tingling she had felt when passing through the rock returned.

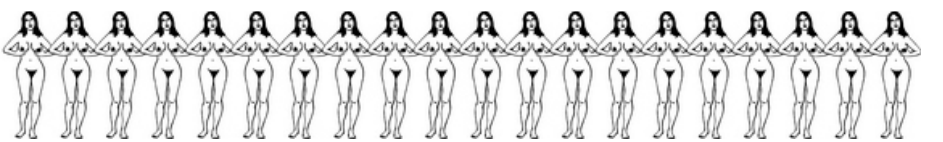
Finally, there was silence, and the sensation of being bound vanished in an instant. She felt a gentle breeze. And it seemed bright again.

Alisha took a deep breath, opened her eyes, and sat up, astonished. The cathedral was gone, as if it had been nothing but a dream. Instead, she lay in the middle of a small grotto of reddish-yellow stone, on a stone table. The grotto was perhaps three or four meters long and wide. At her feet, a narrow exit led outside, and

light streamed through numerous small openings in the rock into the dim interior. From somewhere, Alisha even heard the soothing sound of a waterfall. She had apparently arrived, however that had happened. And now Tim could follow her.
A sigh of relief.
A deep breath.
Alisha sat up.
The grotto was bright and lovely.
And dry.
And pleasantly warm, without being too hot.
Alisha stood and stepped out of the grotto. What she saw was a breathtakingly beautiful, lush green valley with sunlit and shaded spots, stretching between two towering, steep rock faces … a valley that had definitely not been there before. She marveled.
She marveled even more at what lay directly at her feet. Before the grotto was a gentle slope descending into the valley, covered with flowers and lush grass. Alisha gazed upon the most beautiful piece of the world she had ever seen: trees, shrubs, and meadows with colorful flowers and blossoms, a stream murmuring down the valley to her side, the sound of a waterfall in the distance, rich green everywhere, a radiant blue sky above, colorful fruits on shrubs and trees she had never seen before, and countless birds, equally vibrant, chattering merrily. And all of this was separated from her only by the few hundred meters of grassy slope that stretched gently downward from her grotto. When Alisha turned to the stream on her right, she saw it began at a charming waterfall, perhaps five meters above her, springing from the rock at an angle.
The air was pleasantly warm, perhaps even very warm, but not hot, and yet it felt fresh. Alisha took several steps forward onto the gently sloping meadow, breathing in the fresh air deeply, feeling incredibly free and relieved of all hardships, and she rejoiced with delight at this dreamlike, beautiful surroundings.
And something else happened: the fear and tension of the past hours peeled away from her, the desert she had crossed faded from memory, and a wave of comforting warmth flooded her entire body. A strange, relaxed sensation, starting at her fingertips and toes, spread slowly but inexorably through her body.
Very relaxing.
Very pleasant.
Even more pleasant.
Even more so.
It felt like a gentle, warm wave moving toward her core. Now the sensation grew almost sexual—no, it was unmistakably sexual, even urgent—and it spread relentlessly toward her center. Relentlessly. Alisha, she thought to herself, you're not about to have a spontaneous orgasm, are you? Just a little more, please, she hoped.

But, cruelly, it wasn't quite enough … she was still far from the peak.
Alisha breathed heavily. What a tease.
You can't think clearly like this, Alisha decided, and with a sigh, she lay on her back in the lush grass, hoping to remedy the situation. Lying on her back, legs facing the valley, head toward the rocky slopes, she gazed at the blue sky, her fingers resting idly in the grass, savoring the moment without caring about anything else. Whether she lay there for ten minutes or an entire hour, she couldn't have said afterward.

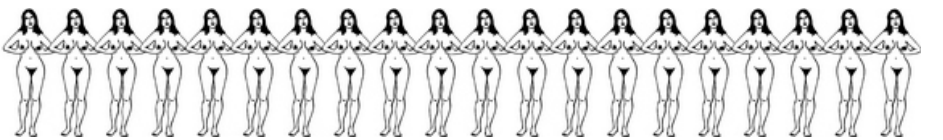
"Ahem," a male voice cleared its throat at her head. "Welcome to paradise … which, by the way, isn't a bad joke. Except it's called Peridëis, but the rest is true."



Object P

Ministry for State Security[3], Object P, Assembly Room
Head of the Department:

Comrades!
There are comrades who jerk off, comrades.
Into the curtains! Comrades!
Comrades, this won't do, comrades.
Our task as Chekist lone fighters is difficult, but one must pull oneself together, comrades.
So, comrades: Show toughness and still fulfill the task.
That's all. And whoever gets caught washes the whole mess. Dismissed!



3 MfS = Ministerium für Staatssicherheit = Ministry for State Security = Stasi. Within the MfS, the word "Stasi" was considered derogatory and typically avoided. Only regular guard soldiers used it with a mocking undertone.

Peridëis

Alisha

It was sometime during the deepest days of the GDR[4], and it was the beginning of summer. Alisha sat at her desk in her one-room apartment with an outdoor toilet in Berlin's Prenzlauer Berg district. But calling it a one-room apartment was generous, as it consisted only of a tiny hallway and an adjoining kitchen-living room. Alisha had just returned from a rather extensive medical examination—something about job fitness. Afterward, she had wandered through the city instead of taking the tram. Now, Alisha was glad to finally be home and able to relax. Stretching her feet under the table, looking out the window, maybe reading a bit. Just three days ago, she had tidied the desk in front of her large kitchen-living room window and thrown out a pile of papers from her bookshelf. After all, it had been a year since she completed her high school diploma. More precisely: a vocational training with a high school diploma, three years, and now she was 20. It could still take some time before she got the university place she wanted. That was the price of choosing confirmation over the socialist youth ceremony and showing complete disinterest in socially useful activities. Stupidity creates free time. At least no one had smeared anything about politically negative statements or the like into her report card. She wasn't the martyr type and only opened her mouth where it made a difference.
That was behind her.
Now there was finally some time to live.
Alisha thought.

Alisha's apartment was a dump she had occupied without bureaucratic hassle, but that could be fixed, both practically and administratively. The main thing was having her own place. And a sewing machine. With that, she could alter clothes so she didn't look like a state-owned scarecrow. Plus, it earned her money and produced goods for bartering. For example, an ultra-chic pair of men's trousers in exchange for a roof repair. A man had glued roofing felt onto the tenement's roof, and now it no longer leaked when she forgot to empty the children's bathtub stored in the attic. The man had taken two hours, and the hole was gone. Why couldn't the housing administration manage that?
Despite its tininess, the apartment wasn't all that bad. It was bright, being under the roof, and well-lit since the large kitchen-living room window faced south.

4 Astonishingly, a geographical location can become a temporal designation. Ed.

There was a big chestnut tree in front of it. If you squinted, you could almost imagine living in the middle of a park. The outdoor toilet, though, was lousy. Still, she had it to herself since there was only one apartment per floor in her rear-wing section of the courtyard. If a full bladder woke her at night, she could dash down half the stairs to the toilet naked. Plus, the apartment door one floor below was barricaded from the inside because tenants from the middle staircase had broken through the wall to enlarge their apartment that way. So, her nearest neighbors were two floors down—a student couple. And at the very bottom, in the ground-floor apartment, lived Stinky, a nice but somewhat unkempt drunk who supposedly worked as a night porter somewhere, though he probably just slept there.
In the other wings of the courtyard, there was also a professor, a Stasi couple (so people said), a crazy, alcoholic mother with her mentally disabled adult son, a man who seemed to have a sexual relationship with his circular saw in the basement, a hobby Native American enthusiast, a refined elderly former teacher, next to her a lively pensioner who hated the former teacher like the plague and always made lewd remarks to young craftsmen; then there was a couple where the wife regularly beat the husband, who didn't seem to mind, and up in the front building, a few meters across the courtyard from Alisha, a prostitute. Officially, she worked as a cloakroom attendant at Café Warsaw, but she regularly brought "acquaintances," as she called them, who always stayed for far less than a night. The front-building residents took great interest in this, with the women keeping an eye out to ensure their men stayed away from her, and vice versa. With makeup, the woman looked 35 from the front; from behind, in jeans, she had the backside of an 18-year-old (Western jeans—she had good clothes); without makeup, she looked like a ghoul. Alisha had witnessed this firsthand when the woman, screaming bloody murder in her bathrobe at 2 a.m., had stood at her door because things had apparently gotten too loud in Alisha's apartment. The other tenants had just laughed the next day, saying the woman should keep quiet herself—she'd done far worse. Unfortunately, they didn't share any details. But that's not what this is about anyway.

Alisha sat at her desk by the window, and on the table in front of her lay an opened, thick envelope. Inside had been a small, leather-bound booklet and a concert ticket for that same evening. There was no stamp on the envelope—the sender must have dropped it directly into Alisha's mailbox. More precisely, into the old mail slot right at her apartment door, not the new mailbox downstairs in the hallway. The strangest thing was the sender. It couldn't be right, as it was the name and last address of her long-deceased great-grandmother, whom she only vaguely remembered from early childhood and from others' stories—a lively woman who got her way almost everywhere except sometimes with her own husband, they had told Alisha with a laugh. Perhaps this great-grandmother had

intended for Alisha to receive the booklet. The concert ticket, though, hardly, as it was brand new.

The booklet wasn't new but didn't look worn. Embossed in dark brown letters on the leather cover was "Peridëis." Curious, Alisha opened the booklet.
The inner title page bore only the note:

PERIDËIS

Alternate spelling: Perideis.
The vowels e and i are pronounced separately, Peri-dee-is.

No author, no publisher, no year, no further information at all. Alisha turned the page. Thick, beige paper. About 50 pages, perhaps, not much, and large print. Now it began. Apparently a story:

Peridëis

Long and long ago, in a lonely and desolate region, a ship fell from the sky. Why the ship could fly remains shrouded in mystery, as does its appearance and origin. But it is known that only a single man survived the ship's plunge from the heights. And when he surveyed what remained intact, he saw little that was still usable. Still, he had a small dinghy and a few other trifles left. What food and drink there was might last for a while, but it didn't make the heart leap. And since the region seemed barren for miles around, offering not a single plant far and wide, let alone the lowliest creature, there was no hope of improving the meals.
But one important thing remained to him, and that was a golden sphere, of extraordinary durability. Not particularly large was this golden sphere, but it had it in itself, and one could take that quite literally. It was worth more than the gold it was made of; indeed, wars had been fought to gain possession of just one such golden sphere, for such spheres were not exactly cheap, and not every run-of-the-mill king (just to name an example) could have afforded one. This golden sphere had some very peculiar properties. As it was now, it was the size of a man's clenched fist and perfectly round. But its shape and size were changeable. And whoever did not deliberately wish to touch it simply passed through it, as if it weren't there at all. So, for example, if someone didn't see it, they wouldn't notice it either. It is said that this sphere was something called another dimension, or in other words, it contained within itself a compete, self-contained world. The strangest thing, however, was that one

could enter it, this other world.
And more: The golden sphere was, by its design, a kind of wish-whatever-you-want sphere, to put it in simple and understandable terms. For the world it contained was a wish-whatever-you-want world. If one plunged into this golden sphere—and that was, as said, possible—one became tiny, and found oneself inside the golden sphere in a vast space that arranged itself entirely according to one's own desires, no matter what they were. True, one could bring nothing out of the sphere and nothing into it, but what one created inside, one had in hand inside. And on the other hand, unwanted things stayed outside, like fleas, for example, and indeed all diseases. Anything else? Well, everything stayed outside that didn't belong to one's own body in its true state. And not only that, inside the sphere, one didn't age a single moment, no matter how long one lingered within. So, one could dive into the sphere sneezing, live there merrily for two or three hundred years without a sniffle, then emerge, finish sneezing, and be wished "Good health!" That's the kind of sphere it was. Some owners of such golden spheres dove into this sphere-world for pure pastime, doing certain and uncertain things to ward off boredom, while others used the sphere to test things out, and still others created fantastic dream worlds within and demanded a small fee for it (and inside, hordes of hairdressers, bath-wives, makeup artists, and more collected an extra penny or two when certain women grumbled about their original state). Hiding in the golden sphere in bad times to wait things out wasn't a bad idea either.
So, the man took the golden sphere and searched and found a deep cave in a lonely, desolate mountain landscape, where he could hide it well and safely. What remained intact and usable from the ship's crash, he took with him, especially the small dinghy—you never know. And he commanded the sphere to expand and entered the world within the sphere.
But when the man arrived inside the golden sphere, it was dark, and the man said: Let there be light! And there was light. A great and bright lamp hung in the center of the great sphere, providing light and warmth. And the man decreed that there should also be day and night, so the lamp grew brighter by day and dimmer by night, and a day lasted 25 hours[5]. And the man found it good.
And when this was done, the man saw that the inside of the sphere was so infinitely vast that no end was in sight. But it was desolate and empty.

5 Interestingly, the human internal clock has a cycle of 25 hours, not 24, as one might expect.

So the man said, I need water to drink and earth for food to grow on. And behold, within the round of the golden sphere, land formed with rivers and lakes and a sea in between, and clouds floated above the land, to which the water could rise and eventually fall again. And when one stood on the land or swam in the water, everything was like in the here and now, for nothing would have revealed that one stood within the round of a hollow sphere, so vast was it and so well was everything arranged. And the man found it good.

And now, said the man, I need plants on the ground and in the water, bearing things I can eat and use otherwise, and which are also pretty to look at. And numerous plants grew, each different in appearance and each bearing a different fruit. And the man found it good.

And when this was done, the man said, animals are missing—some to walk, some to swim, and some to fly, but none smaller than a fingernail, so I can squash them with my foot if they annoy me. And the sky, the earth, and the water filled with creatures, none smaller than a fingernail. And the man found it especially good.

And when this was done, he said, it's so quiet here, I'd like to hear other voices besides my own. And the animals, glad to be able to speak, filled the round with a hellish noise, for they chattered nonstop and told each other the news, especially the birds. A little quieter, please! demanded the man, and the animals kept talking but a bit more softly. Yet the man noticed that, despite their newfound speech, the animals were no wiser than before. And the man felt something was still missing.

And then the man said, it's not good to be alone. We need more people to ease my loneliness, like me but not equal, for I wish to stand above them. Just to be safe, for I am mild but not foolish. And behold, the land filled with people, like him but not equal, and he stood far above them, for they entertained him and even worshipped him, yet lived in fear of him. And he said, worship me and serve me, and I will ensure you fare well. So they served him, and he ensured they had little to do and much pleasure in each other, and he in them, especially the women. And when he found the women good, he found one thing still missing.

And then the man said, we need something for eternal joy, and a certain spirit entered the people, filling their loins with everlasting longing, each for the other sex, and some for their own. And the people fell upon each other with cries of joy, and a wild chaos reigned. And the man found something still missing.

And then the man said, we need many preferences, all quite different, so each seeks a steady partner who best knows and shares their own

distinct preferences, unlike those of others. And so it happened. Many still tried this one and that, but in the end, the happiest were those who had a steady partner who best knew and shared their particular preferences. And the man found it good and took pleasure in it himself.

And the golden sphere—let's not forget all this happened inside it—the golden sphere ensured by itself that everything stayed as its owner had created it, for that was its purpose, whether as a refuge, a place of pleasure, or to test things before the owner tackled them in the here and now. But now the sphere was to serve as a refuge, perhaps even for eternity. And it was good that inside the sphere, no one could die, neither man nor beast; only the plants kept renewing themselves. But a life from itself, be it man or beast, the golden sphere could not create, for it was not made for that, and far more would have been required. All higher life within it was thus created, not begotten, and people and animals did not change inside but remained as they were, for all time. Only the forgetfulness and general imperfection of its creatures ensured not everything stayed the same. But all in all, the sphere, far from real life, far from the here and now, was a secret place where every kind of joy reigned. Not the vain joy of the boring kind—some of the joys were, well, rather of the long-term sort with greater allure.

So the man lived a long, very long time with countless joys in the vast world inside the sphere, the sun always shining above him at its zenith, never too hot and never too cool, and at night it dimmed and stood as a moon above him, so one wouldn't be entirely in the dark. And a little cloud of stars he let slowly orbit around it, to make it prettier. But colorful stars, he allowed himself some artistic license. And he made many small improvements. And so it wouldn't get boring over time, he divided the people into different tribes and let a maze of steep mountains and deep fertile valleys grow between them, with streams and rivers running through, lush green and colorful blossoms filling the valleys, some valleys large and some small, some bright and some almost impassable, and some entirely filled with water. And as he had arranged it so, the tribes, who could only know their neighbors, developed quite different preferences in clothing, houses, and customs, but also in sensual pleasures, which grew especially diverse, so the man was never bored when visiting the different tribes. One must not forget that the people were created, not begotten, and so the game of arousal was as harmless as enjoying wine or beer in the here and now, only without the hangover, for no parents or husband had to worry that their wife or child might be wrongly impregnated, or a man cause external obligations, for

such things were unknown. Which, on the other hand, is a pity, for with begotten fresh life, it would have been even more interesting, but what cannot be, cannot be, and eventually even the vast golden sphere would have become too full inside. But not to digress: Thus, there was no real reason to keep key and lock apart, so the gates opened and closed busily to find out which key fit best.

But one thing the man lacked: As beautiful and interesting as life in his self-created world inside the vast sphere was, the people in it were rather simple and had few ideas of their own, let alone great ones. This vexed him somewhat, and besides, he constantly had to fix things the created people in the sphere couldn't grasp themselves. All too often, the people sent a pretty woman as a sacrifice to the temples, to lie provocatively with spread thighs on the altar, to lure him to fix something for them (once again) after he had attended to her. Which wasn't entirely selfless of the woman, for the LOrd had ensured that the snakes of the created men were somewhat shorter, less enduring, and less vigorous than his own. Not that the offered sacrifice was unpleasant to the LOrd, for they usually sent exceptionally lovely women, but it grew tiring over time, and most of the willing women wanted to be pleasured multiple times once they had the LOrd himself in their arms. And so, with a heavy heart, he decided not to answer every call, and the people, for once, had a bigger idea, for they bound the sacrificed woman on the altar. One couldn't exactly leave her lying there, the LOrd thought, but on the other hand, this added an interesting twist to the act of sacrifice. Yet the reason the LOrd appeared more often in one temple and less in another spread, and so they upped the ante by not just binding the sacrificed woman but also whipping her (but only until she begged for mercy, which, given certain cost-benefit calculations, rarely happened). Such devotion impressed the LOrd even more, but eventually, it became too much, and he commanded a halt. Whip yourselves, bind yourselves as much as you like, he said, but do not try to force me into anything, for this vexes me. And so they largely abandoned bloody sacrificial rites. At least for the most part; some people can never be taught.

After the world inside the golden sphere was thus well arranged, the LOrd decided to check on things outside the golden sphere as well. It is not recorded what he did in the here and now, only that he hid the golden sphere even better and ensured it stretched and expanded in a wondrous way, slipping through secret gaps of the here and now, invisibly and intangibly weaving through it, being everywhere at once and yet nowhere. Comprehend who can, but we cannot and may only mar-

vel. Thus, the LOrd could create numerous secret passages where he could enter the golden sphere from the here and now. And so it was that he occasionally checked on things at various points in the here and now but spent most of his time enjoying himself inside the golden sphere.

And he arranged it so one could enter the golden sphere from the here and now: The entrance was always well hidden, so he took a deep underground tunnel or a cave or a remote rock high in the mountains and made a rock or a rock door one had to pass through. One had to take a determined step toward it, and then one simply passed through. Once done, one was already within the sphere's sphere of influence, for it was the sphere that made this possible. But one was only in its shell, not yet inside. There, one first entered a large cave, good for hiding objects from the here and now, for the golden sphere would never let those inside, and the LOrd had salvaged some trifles from his ship whose storage he didn't want to leave to chance. But he also had to shed his clothing to enter the golden sphere. And he would need it again when he emerged from the golden sphere. Let's call the cave a dressing room, for the word isn't entirely unfitting. Where was I? Oh yes, and in this cave, which we just called a "dressing room," he set up a way for one to lie down, when ready, to let one's spirit be carried into the sphere-world. How exactly this happened remains a mystery, at least as long as one doesn't believe in magic. If we could ask the creators of the golden sphere, we'd know, but as it is, scholars must argue over whether things inside the sphere always happened by fair means or not. It doesn't matter, so let the scholars debate until their hair turns gray, for they can't measure anything inside the sphere since they can't bring their precious instruments along.

But what happened when one lay down and a whirlwind carried one into the golden sphere? Well, nothing more than waking up in a very similar cave, but one already inside the golden sphere. This cave inside the golden sphere had a purpose much like the one in the here and now: one could leave behind what the sphere recognized as its own and thus wouldn't let out into the here and now.

And the LOrd created numerous such passages over the years, each starting at a different point in the here and now and leading to a different point inside the golden sphere. Men do enjoy such games. But it also had the practical use that one could travel from various points inside the golden sphere to various points in the here and now and vice versa.

And over all this, years passed, but the LOrd did not grow old and gray, for inside the golden sphere, one simply doesn't age, and he didn't

overdo his stays outside, for it wasn't as nice out there as inside.
One day, after a long time and an even longer time, it happened that the LOrd, while checking on things in the here and now, was nearly struck down by twelve fairies who fell from the sky to his left, right, front, and back. Help us! cried the fairies and fell to their knees before him after picking themselves up. Help us, they cried, for we are on the run. The twelve fairies were fleeing from a hundred and twenty wild, insatiable men, they said, who all wanted to penetrate them and who knows what else. So they had fled when those wild men lay drunk on beer and mead[6]. And the fairies had, moreover, two small children with them, named Adam and Eve, whom they had found on their flight, the last survivors of their people. What exactly the fairies had been through remains a mystery, for they spoke in confusion and contradicted each other, and no one knows if it was ever written down what had happened to them.
But now they were here.
And the LOrd took pity on them and was glad to finally have equals to talk to, and also that two children were with them. And so he led the twelve fairies and the two children through one of his secret passages into the golden sphere. And in honor of the fairies, he named his land "Peridëis," for "Peri"[7] means "fairy" and "-dëis" simply "land" or "region," for everything is more fun when it has meaning and purpose, and besides, the fairies were quite comely and inspired him.
But the fairies were very afraid of their pursuers and that they might find one of the secret passages into the golden sphere (now called Peridëis), even if the world in Peridëis seemed nearly infinite and one would have had to search long to find them. So the LOrd pondered what to do, but outside the golden sphere (now called Peridëis), he had no power, and so he decided to arrange life within Peridëis so no harm could come to the fairies.
And he sat down and thought about how to achieve this, and the fairies stood in a semicircle around him. And as he sat and looked straight ahead, his gaze fell on the fairies, and an idea ripened in him: The fairies bore, plainly visible on their fronts, breasts, in the center of which a little nub protruded boldly forward (or down or sideways), darker in color and surrounded by a similarly colored, rugged islet. And as he sat, he looked straight into a semicircle of twenty-four breasts, for the fairies stood very close around him. And those breasts pleased him exceedingly, for the

6 A text fragment seems to have been lost here.
7 In the Orient, a fairy is still called a "Peri" today.

created women in Peridëis lacked such things and were flat like the men. So the LOrd asked the fairies:
What are these pretty things with the dark islets and nubs that point forward, sideways, or down, of which you each carry two so plainly on your bodies that one can't help but stare?[8]
The fairies answered: These things with the dark islets and nubs that point forward, sideways, or down, of which we each carry two so plainly on our bodies that one can't help but stare, are called breasts. But there are many other names for them, and it would take too long to list them all.
If there are many names for the same pair of things, they must be of great importance? asked the LOrd (and couldn't get enough of looking at the things).
They are, replied the fairies. First, they are an adornment for us women; second, a weapon against other women; third, an infallible lure for men's eyes; fourth, they give pleasure; fifth, they bring delight to men's hands and mouths; and sixth, they yield white drops, called milk, for the children.
In that order? asked the LOrd.
The twelve fairies with the twenty-four things called breasts turned red twelve times but said not a word.
What's wrong with you? asked the LOrd, puzzled.
Well, replied the fairies, it's like this: these two children weren't born of us; we found them, all alone, with no one far and wide to care for them. And so we took them along because we pitied them. But now they must go hungry, for not one of us fairies has enough milk in her breasts to satisfy the children; only one has a few drops, and another, with much effort, a single one. Know that usually, only a woman who has given birth carries milk in her breasts for a time, or longer.
And the fairies looked very worried.
You need not look so worried, said the LOrd.
Why shouldn't we look worried? asked the fairies.
Because I am the LOrd of this world, said the LOrd, and he looked slyly.
The fairies looked a little less worried, but only a little.
Very well, said the LOrd, let us combine the pleasant with the useful, always the best way: This shall happen. All women in Peridëis shall

8 In modern times, experiments with cameras tracking pupil movements have shown that men, even in everyday situations, tend to look at women's breasts before their faces. The face, however, is the next most important focus. Women look slightly differently, paying a bit more attention to the face. See also the chapter "Intershop."

grow breasts, as you fairies so splendidly bear them.
And as he said this, a great pinching, tugging, stretching, and stinging went through the fronts of the women in Peridëis, and breasts grew on them, making them groan, each pair different—some larger, some smaller—some round, some oval—some pointing forward, sideways, or down—and all pretty to behold.
Ouch! said the women, this hurts. But at the same time, they whispered that it could have been a bit more, for the breasts pleased them. Have some patience, said the LOrd, and don't be so ungrateful. And he found it good. And he decreed: The women shall henceforth wear their breasts bare as an adornment and in my honor, as one does not hide one's light under a bushel, and it would be indecent to conceal them, for the bare breasts of the fairies first gave the crucial idea and inspired me[9]. And further, he said, I instill in the men a deep reverence for their women's breasts, so they honor and heed them as I do.
And as the women's breasts had grown, something else happened: If one only pressed, pulled, tugged, or sucked on them, the breasts gave a tasty white drop. And now, said the LOrd, this is the most important thing: all women in Peridëis shall always carry such white drops in their breasts, which the fairies called milk. For these tasty white drops have a deeper purpose...
Help! the fairies interrupted his speech, our breasts are all leaking drops, and we feel a pinching, stinging, pressing, and growing too. And behold: From one's nub came a droplet, from another's a stream, from the next a brook, and from yet another a whole fountain.
The LOrd, delighting in the sight, wondered. Well, he asked, don't you like it?
We do, replied the fairies, but there are only two children here; what's all this milk for?
For versatile use, said the LOrd, for I've thought it through. A small part we take for the children, with another part do as you please, but most shall be for the men, and now listen well: Since you sought protection, this shall happen: Henceforth in Peridëis, it shall go ill for anyone who lacks enough of a special life essence in themselves. But you women shall produce this life essence in abundance, so much that it overflows, especially from your breasts. The men, however, shall produce only the tiniest part themselves, enough for a few days, but no more—the bulk they must get from you women.

9 Certain cultures are known for women baring their breasts during worship rituals in temples.

And since your pursuers seem bent on spilling their life essence, this very thing will stop them from sinking their snake deep into your womb for that purpose. And don't forget, the men's snakes lose life essence deliberately when awake but also unwittingly in sleep. If the men now get new life essence from you women, all shall be well for them; if not, it shall go ill[10]. And since, especially in the evening, hardly a man can keep his life essence to himself, henceforth in Peridëis, scarcely a man shall live longer than a week without taking in these white drops from the breasts, which you called milk. And if, after losing his life essence, he fails to take in these white drops from the breasts, which you called milk, then within a few days his mind shall be lost, he shall degenerate to a beast, living in the forest only for food and his lust, which shall be all the stronger (and the tool for it too), so he remains in this state until a woman redeems him by giving him her milk, if she so wills.

And that was cleverly thought, for even the chastest man loses, in sleep when his will is clouded, at least a small amount of his essence, of which only a small stain may remind him in the morning.

Thus, the LOrd turned to the fairies, your pursuers will leave you be without even realizing it. For pursuit requires a mind, but the strong urge keeps it in this state for selfish, shortsighted reasons, like a drunkard who won't stop drinking and feels good in his stupor.

And he was very proud of his idea.

Half the fairies laughed, but the other half asked, say, why leave a way to redeem them?

Well, said the LOrd, it occurred to me, upon reflection, I too am a man, and half the people in Peridëis are as well... so let's not make this entirely one-sided.

And the LOrd thought again: To not make it too unfair...

The fairies gasped in alarm.

...To not make it too unfair, you shall have your share of balance. It should suffice, I think, if your skirts itch properly...

But not so fiercely, the fairies cried in alarm, we're melting!

...and not just the skirts. These certain desires shall spread to other parts of the body, especially the nubs would be quite useful, but not only. Since then, the fallen men, called satyrs, grow mighty tools, but the women can feel great joy in various places, especially the nubs, and it gained a deeper meaning, what was once mere fun and pastime, and men and women longed for each other because they needed each other. And to balance the physical power of the men, the women were given an

10 This strongly resembles ideas in (Chinese) Taoism.

equally physical power, which even those not in steady or loose pairs could easily use. For the men could cheaply offer the power of their arms, and the women the power of their breasts. Everything else followed naturally, for even then people weren't unfeeling blocks of wood, and if a woman's breast dried up for a time, men surely offered help for free, and if a man was weak for a time, women surely gave him their milk without reward. And for the rest, Peridëis provided all for life in abundance.

Only once did a fairy, named Ashara, come in a wild state, and when the others asked what had happened, she replied that one of the certain men, a satyr, bereft of reason and in raging lust, had attacked her in the forest, stunned her with his animal scent, and rattled her inside out so that she was half-sore inside, scratched and dirty outside, lost strength for three weeks ahead, and above all, could throw away what was left of her clothes. And what else was he like, the other fairies asked with factual interest. He has a penis like a stallion, but of greater diameter, the fallen fairy fumed. Then some fairies inquired about the exact spot, for they announced they planned, for health reasons, to take forest walks more often and needed to know where to go. Some fairies also considered if the forest might be a good place to live and needed to know which spot was advisable and which not.

But we digress again. Henceforth, in Peridëis, no man could live without a woman's help. And the fairies were content, and so it was. And those men denied the favor of women and fallen to the level of beasts were called satyrs.

And the fairies took their breasts as a symbol of their new power and also pleasure, and like all other women in Peridëis, they left them bare of any clothing as adornments. And one had larger adornments, another smaller, one lemons, others full mangos, one high-breasted, another low, each different and all pretty to behold. And since the springs flowed, this and that practical use was found, which hadn't been considered before and proved useful.

But one fairy, named Ashara, had taken the LOrd especially to heart and asked to have the honor alone of supplying him with her own milk, for he had initially forgotten that he too was a man and needed the milk. That's how it goes, and so one must always remember that a stone you throw may be thrown back at you. But Ashara cared for him well.

Thus, any male enemies were tamed, but for Adam and Eve, the LOrd himself chose a nice spot in the here and now. It lay remote in the desert, but where there was a good water source and plenty of plants and

animals grew, so food and a pleasant setting were assured. A secret passage from the here and now to Peridëis was there too, for the LOrd himself had created this passage long ago because he liked the spot.
So Adam and Eve grew up in the here and now, protected by the fairies, near a passage, but the reason they were to live mostly in the here and now was that one doesn't change in Peridëis, but they had to grow and develop. The LOrd himself checked on things now and then and saw that all was well, and always one of the fairies was near for protection and upbringing. It wasn't hard to go out to Adam and Eve in the here and now or for Adam and Eve to come into Peridëis from the here and now, for only two secret tunnels in the earth and two caves separated the two, and one didn't have to walk far.
One day, the time came when Eva began to sprout breasts above and hair below and under her arms, and the LOrd took the two aside and first spoke to Eva: Say, Eva, are the fruits that have sprouted above you already filled with sap and ripe when you visit us in Peridëis from your desert oasis in the here and now?
They are filled and ripe, oh LOrd.
And does that plum between your legs already feel it wants to be touched and shared?
It gives me no rest, oh LOrd.
Then the LOrd asked, turning to Adam, And you, Adam, does your snake already awaken and urge for play and emptying?
Now and then, oh LOrd, but I don't yet understand the game, for I know nothing of emptying.
Well, said the LOrd, there's still a little time for the snake, but do you feel a desire for more than play when you see Eva?
Oh yes, LOrd, said Adam, I always dream of her and that I want to kiss her and touch her fruits.
Very well, said the LOrd, so understand, both of you, that you are no longer children, you, Adam, just now, and you, Eva, for a while already. Adam will henceforth receive a cup of fairy milk from the fairies whenever you enter Peridëis; it's high time, for without the milk, it would soon go ill for him there.
But heed my warning: Each of you may eat of your own fruits as much as you like. Your own! But do not yet taste the fruits of the other.
And he went away.
So time passed.
Gradually, Adam became manlier, which filled some fairies with strange unease; his snake grew strong and was crowned with more than just

fuzz. And when he gave it enough attention, it rewarded him with a wondrous surge and a gushing spurt, which looked quite different from what came when urinating and had another interesting scent.
This didn't escape Eva, and one day she took Adam by the hand and said, come, I'll show you an interesting place you've never been.
And they ran a bit, and a bit more, and came to a place that was pretty but where Adam found nothing special.
What's special here, asked Adam.
Here no one can see us, that's what's special, said Eva, and her voice sounded different than usual. She stood right in front of Adam and looked at him with such strange eyes that he felt quite peculiar.
Both stood motionless.
Then Eva guided Adam's hands to her breasts and leaned toward him and kissed him cautiously on his lips.
Adam's breath quickened, blood rushed to his snake, and it stood steeply erect.
Eva stared at Adam's snake, transfixed. Do you do that on purpose? she asked softly and a little hoarsely.
No, Adam replied, it does that all by itself. And even if I wanted to, I couldn't stop it, but I don't want to stop it; it feels very nice.
Eva pulled Adam to her, and both let out a loud sigh of lust at the mutual touch. Now Adam held Eva fast, and his snake pressed against her womb, her breasts pressed against his body, and he began to play with the tips of her breasts, and she kissed him again, holding his neck so his mouth wouldn't escape, opened her lips, and slipped her tongue into his mouth. And soon after, he dared the same with her. And their tongues explored each other, played together, and it was a great pleasure.
Now Eva pushed Adam back a little to look at his body again and cautiously touched Adam's taut, erect snake, which was not only large but now also of considerable girth.
Taste of my fruits, she demanded and ran the thumb and forefinger of her right hand to her left breast and pointed it toward his mouth. It's high time you taste them. She pressed thumb and forefinger at her nipple, again and again.
What is it, asked Adam?
Eva tugged at her breast and looked puzzled. — I have much less milk here in the here and now than in Peridëis, look! Just a single drop, I don't understand, why?
Maybe you have more when we're back there...
Maybe, murmured Eva, probably even, I didn't notice last time, but when

I was there, my breast felt quite full.
Are you disappointed?
Yes... no!
Eva smiled again — I have more, give me your hand.
Adam gave her his hand, Eva took it and guided it between her legs.
But your plum is all wet and slippery! What did you do?
Thought about what I've long wanted to do with you. Come, hurry.
Eva sat facing him on the ground, lay back, and spread her legs. Adam got a view of her wet, swollen plum, wide open before him, framed by her pubic hair.
Here I always rub with my finger, Eva showed him, and here, look, further in the middle, there's a big hole that goes deep inside me. Come, I'm eager for you to press your snake against it!
Adam knelt excitedly between Eva's open thighs and guided his snake to her slippery plum. And as he knelt over Eva, a wave of intoxicating scents rose from her womb to his nose, and he inhaled them eagerly. A surge of wondrous feelings coursed through him, numbing his mind and taking full possession of him. Eva took his snake from his hand and guided it herself, running it through the flesh of her open plum, vibrating it at the end of the fruit pointing to her navel, pulling it through the wet fruit again, and Adam felt his snake slip into an opening, gently and warmly embraced. Something in Adam reacted, beyond his will, and he thrust hard. His snake was firmly gripped in the depths of Eva's fruit, hugged, sucked, tasted, and a wave of never-before-felt bliss shot through Adam, who had long lost all remnants of his mind.
And so too Eva, who felt a tearing during the thrust and cried out in pain, but moments later felt only pleasure, her fullness; his urgent thrusting, his delight, waves flooded over her, and the pain at the opening of her plum mixed in a strange way into a high feeling that swelled more and more, made her beg Adam not to stop and to change nothing, and so she finally crossed the threshold to a screaming, shaking, pulsing climax.
She noticed Adam paused.
Keep going, she whispered, don't stop, just slow down...
She guided him slowly to what she wanted until the waves in her subsided.
Both lay side by side; she had a leg wrapped around him and pressed her relaxed but still wet plum against his thigh.
Didn't you reach that overflowing surge? she asked him.
I wanted to go higher, especially when your plum squeezed my snake so

hard, but somehow I didn't make it.
Can you do it with your hand?
Yes, usually.
Come, do it with your hand, I'll stroke and kiss you while you do.
Adam lay on his back, and his right hand vibrated at his foreskin. Eva watched, transfixed, for a while, then felt drawn to lick his armpit while her right hand played with one of his nipples. His breath quickened. Eva lifted her head again.
I'm looking at your snake, she whispered, it's beautiful, so strong, so incredibly mighty, and it went deep into me, and the pain of it was pure pleasure.
Adam's breath quickened soon after, his vibrations at the snake grew jerkier, his breathing rhythmic, he began to moan loudly, Eva stared at his snake, and then: A loud cry, a rearing up, and from Adam's snake a white liquid shot in a wide arc onto his chest and Eva's hand, again, and again a little less strongly.
Adam fell back, breathed deeply and loudly, panted, and his hand gradually slowed. One last spurt oozed from his snake and sought a path over his hand, which now only slowly, very slowly, stroked the snake until it finally stopped and came to rest.
Eva hardly dared breathe for a long time, but then cautiously pulled back her hand, which had taken its share, and smelled what had splashed on it. It smelled strangely arousing. She brought her hand to her tongue and tasted. It was slightly salty. Very peculiar. Fascinating. She playfully spread his spurted liquid over his stomach and chest with her hand until he finally came to himself.
And, nice?
Wonderful.
So they lay in each other's arms until Eva finally pulled Adam up: Come, let's go back before anyone notices.
And so they went back. And since no one noticed, they did it again after a few days, and again, and again. And Adam soon learned to make his snake spurt in Eva's womb, and both took great pleasure in it.
And so more time passed.
But one day, Adam said to Eva: Your breasts have become pretty, so heavy and full, and your nipples are darker and more raised than before.
But Eva didn't rejoice as expected and added: And my belly is starting to swell, haven't you noticed?
Now Adam noticed too.
What does that mean? asked Eva, does it have to do with the ban on not

tasting the other's fruits, and now it's all coming out?
And Adam added: And is there something about me that gives it all away? The snake that rises every time you come near and I instantly think of your slippery hole?
And since they knew no better, they decided to cover themselves so no one would notice, Adam his snake and Eva her womb, belly, and breasts. But since, unlike the fairies and the LOrd, they had nothing to wear, they took from the trees what they needed to cover themselves.
To make a long story short: The first fairy wandering in the beautiful nature asked, why are you hiding your bodies? Do you have something to hide?
And then it all came out. And they had to explain to Adam and Eva that Eva was carrying a child in her belly and how it got there. And the LOrd regretted not explaining to Adam and Eva why they were forbidden to taste the other's fruits, only their own, and he realized that a long leash is better than a broken one and that the ban was entirely senseless, for in Peridëis they could have tasted and enjoyed their fruits to their heart's content, just not out in the here and now, for Peridëis creates no new life, and what lives there remains as it is. But out in the here and now, new life arises and develops. Of course, at the price that death exists too. But where life begins, life ends, that's how it is.
But now it was done, and so, through the LOrd's error, Adam and Eva had to live on in the here and now so the life in Eva could develop. She had to give birth in pain in the here and now, and Adam had to toil with his hands for food, for in the here and now, food doesn't grow into your mouth as it does in Peridëis, where it's the most ordinary thing.
But Adam and Eva were in good spirits, for they knew the here and now well, were at home here, and would finally be allowed to be one whenever and as often as they wanted. And they would be allowed to build, create, shape, and become a family. And both looked forward to becoming and being a family. So they debated, argued, negotiated, and settled until they agreed, and Adam and Eva were given permission to be a couple and a family in the here and now, caring for themselves. Which didn't mean the fairies and the LOrd didn't visit them or vice versa. No, quite the contrary, for the fairies took keen interest in the child's development in Eva's belly, were all there when it was finally born, and helped later wherever they could.
Adam and Eva and their descendants stayed in the here and now, even later, and even their grandchildren long honored the fairies for their care and devotion. Only much, much later did the fairies gradually fade from

memory in the here and now. But back then, temples were built for them, and sacrifices were offered. And even today, in the dust of the desert and the rubble of long-gone places, one finds sculptures and images of a woman lifting her breasts with her hands to give and her wide-open hole to receive[11].

So it was in the here and now. But in Peridëis, the LOrd recommended to the fairies (except Ashara) the men he had created in Peridëis for enjoyment. Yet the other fairies were a bit jealous of Ashara. True, the men created by the LOrd himself weren't bad in serving the fairies, for the LOrd had planted in them this and that preference for constant variety, but the LOrd had overlooked that women, besides the type, size, and skill of the snake, care greatly about who its owner is, and the greatest satisfaction may come from a snake attached between the legs of a powerful man, even if it lacks somewhat in vigor and might.

Thank you, said the LOrd, when the other eleven fairies told him this. But see, though I am undoubtedly a powerful man, twelve fairies are certainly a challenge, especially over the years.

The fairies didn't see it. Who can understand women?

So more time passed, and the LOrd took pleasure in making Peridëis even more beautiful and interesting, and wondrous things are said to be among them, and he devised ever new landscapes, and within them new customs, and he didn't forget to create marvelous surprises between the new landscapes, sensual ones of every kind, but one day the LOrd said, I am tired and wish to rest, and my favorite fairy Ashara will go with me. We will find a special secret place and lie down to sleep there.

Then the other eleven fairies were very alarmed. What will we do if you're not here? And we don't understand, like you, how to guide this world and keep order in Peridëis.

Then the LOrd said: Well, you eleven fairies shall know where this secret place is. And if you get into serious trouble, serious I say, then you may wake me, and I will come with Ashara and help you.

And so the LOrd gave each of the eleven fairies one more pleasure, and finally, the LOrd vanished with his favorite fairy Ashara, and the remaining eleven fairies took care of the land of the golden sphere, now called Peridëis, the land of the fairies. Legend has it that the LOrd and his favorite fairy Ashara sleep entwined somewhere in a great mountain on an island. This is the best-kept secret of the eleven fairies.

11 However, the open vulva was often omitted out of modesty, which somewhat distorts the meaning.

But even how to get from the here and now to the fabled Peridëis, where one lives forever and has eternal pleasure, even that no one knows anymore. From time to time, a passage from the here and now to Peridëis is said to be found and revered as a shrine. But these always fall again into the hands of a few who bar others from entry. You know how it is: If there's something desirable for all, it awakens desires in some. First, someone decides sometime that maintaining the desired thing is somehow costly and a small fee must be charged. This goes on, with the fee steadily rising, until someone gets the idea that, for this or that reason, not everyone can be let in, of course for the good of all and usually to protect the excluded or because the desired thing might wear out. And in the end, all but a few chosen ones are left outside, and the excluded can, usually for a certain fee for the effort, only hear stories about the desired thing. And so it doesn't hurt, the stories about the desired thing are varied by adding something here and leaving something out there. If done well, the people get their fill of longing, and the chosen one realizes an unfulfilled promise brings more power than a fulfilled one.

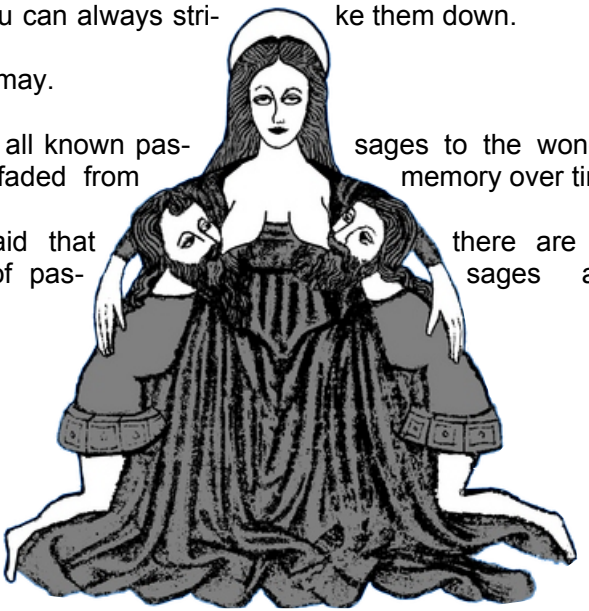
For mark this: Water sells better in the desert than by the spring, and a secretly filled well not only increases profit but also one's own importance. Let the thirsty walk far if they won't buy. And if too many complain, you can always stri- ke them down.

Be that as it may.

In any case, all known pas- sages to the wondrous world of Peridëis faded from memory over time.

But it is said that there are still people who know of pas- sages and guard them.

So it is told.



Alisha

Alisha set the booklet aside. Tucked in the very back was a folded piece of paper. Alisha took the paper and unfolded it:

Proverbs 5:18-19

King James Bible, 1611:

18: Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.
19: Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.

Contemporary English Version:

18: Be happy with the wife you married when you were young.
19: She is beautiful and graceful as a deer. Let her love always make you happy; let her love always hold you captive.

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia:

18: יְהִי־מְקוֹרֵךְ בָּרוּךְ וְשְׂמַח מֵאֵשֶׁת נְעוּרֶךָ׃
19: אַיֶּלֶת אֲהָבִים וְיַעֲלַת־חֵן דַּדֶּיהָ יְרַוֵּךָ בְכָל־עֵת בְּאַהֲבָתָהּ תִּשְׁגֶּה תָמִיד׃

דַּדֶּיהָ יְרַוֵּךָ
ḏaddêhā yərawukkā: “her breasts may drench/satisfy you.”

יְרַוֵּךָ
rāwâ: “to drench,” “to satisfy,” “to abundantly refresh,” or “to moisten.”

The paradise story of Adam and Eve was at least roughly known in the GDR—and especially to Alisha, who lived a life caught between state-imposed upbringing, church confirmation, and her own sensuality. The story in this little booklet deviated from the original in an intriguing way. The thing with the different Bible translations on the note became downright puzzling, where satisfying breasts became happy love. Beyond that, the booklet had another effect: for the first time in her life, Alisha had read a story with detailed descriptions of intimate moments, and its impact on her was profound. She would have loved to explore more of the vague fantasies her body conjured up. But what, with whom, where, and how? A boyfriend was nowhere in sight, and

imaginative encounters beyond that were even less conceivable. “If only I had a secret door that led to the paradise of this story… hidden somewhere downstairs behind a secret cellar door. You’d walk through a wall and, whoosh!, you’re in another world, with eternal good weather, pleasantly warm, not as gray as here, but colorful, full of adventure, with satyrs, and free from rotten moral rules that make life pointlessly dull. At dances, there are no empty dance floors or rejections, and interesting men do interesting things with women without inhibition. The dancers around you are all half-naked, discarded jackets, shirts, trousers, and skirts are carelessly kicked aside, while hands roam over each other’s bodies, bodies press against one another, the men’s lustful indicators rise steeply and press into the women’s wombs. And the audience around the dancers cheers them on and…”

“…Alisha! You’re dreaming!”

Alisha snapped out of it. She was still sitting at her desk, the last page of the booklet open before her, and outside her window, Prenzlauer Berg with its old, crumbling buildings and the chestnut tree in front.

There was still the concert ticket. A glance at it told her she should get going if she didn’t want to miss the concert. It was a Bach cantata, one she didn’t know, but that didn’t mean much. Was she in the mood for classical music today? Oh, whatever! She’d go anyway; her apartment was getting on her nerves today, and a concert would do her good.

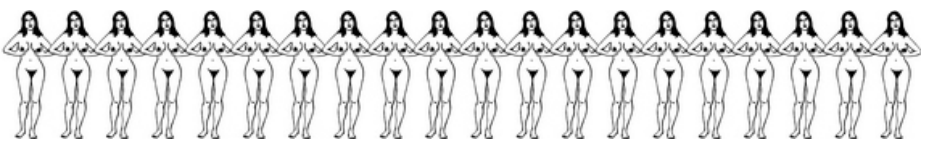
The concert took place in one of the drearier parts of East Berlin—in a dilapidated church with boarded-up windows, its Wilhelmine mix of styles not particularly to Alisha’s taste. But inside, the church was quite appealing; white walls framed with brickwork. A bit of care and color, and it could look impressive again. About 100 concertgoers sat with Alisha in the church.

The start was a surprise. No concert was announced, but rather a rehearsal with invited guests for a record recording, which promised good musicians. But then Alisha was speechless, for these were artists who normally filled concert halls. Alisha melted during the performance, especially since the acoustics of this boarded-up church were unique. It was a secular composition by Bach that, to Alisha’s astonishment, closely resembled the Christmas Oratorio. But here, it was about the gods trying to lead Hercules onto the path of true virtue. Alisha didn’t side with virtue as the piece suggested (or did it?), but with seductive lust, which skillfully ensnared Hercules. “Taste the pleasure / of the lustful heart / And know no boundaries,” it beckoned. A memory stirred in Alisha. The admonitions of virtue sounded dull in comparison. It almost seemed grotesque to Alisha that Hercules was supposed to choose virtue over lust at the end of the piece, when virtue, after toil and effort, had nothing to offer but the right path, fame, and glory, but no real reward.

Typical, thought Alisha. Pathos is usually preached when someone wants you to pull a hot potato out of the fire for them, only for them to toss it away or eat it themselves, while you're left with a cheap medal pinned to your chest and a growling stomach, watching. And in the piece she'd just heard, the juicy allure of lust stood in strange contrast to the apparent moral of the story. Above all, not a word about how lust could also be virtuous, or virtue could come with lust.
No! thought Alisha. Suffer and achieve nothing? I won't let my hole dry up—and if it all goes wrong, at least I'll have had some fun until then.

Somehow, Alisha hoped to be approached by the mysterious sender of the letter after the concert. But no one spoke to her, though she lingered a while as the concertgoers dispersed. Nothing happened on her way home either.

When Alisha got home, the booklet was gone. In its place was a bar of whole milk chocolate. The very best whole milk chocolate. Next to it, a greeting card with the printed words: "See you soon!" A shiver ran through Alisha. Not fear. No. Something special was in the air.



Main Administration for State Security[12]

Minister for State Security:
Comrades, the matter we are discussing today is subject to the highest level of secrecy. Even toward our friends and Party bodies. We don't even fully know what's going on with this matter, and no one must take it out of our hands. We need to determine who might accidentally know about it and then decide what to do. The matter in question contradicts everything we know and could therefore completely undermine our power. Completely! So remember: This is about the question of power! That's all from me. Now, Comrade Peters will provide more details.

Comrade Peters:
We don't know where this phenomenon we're about to discuss comes from or what it's based on. It appeared suddenly—or rather, we don't know if it wasn't already there before. So… I'll just start. There are remnants of an old cellar, made of fieldstone, half-destroyed, with a kind of gate. You can walk through it and come out somewhere else.

Minister for State Security:
It's horrific.

(Laughter)

Minister for State Security:
Please, comrades!

Comrade Peters:
This isn't a laughing matter. I didn't mean to say that this gate simply leads to another exit. It doesn't open into another cellar room but leads to an entirely different world. Categories like *GDR*, *Europe*, or *Earth* no longer apply to describe it. It's reminiscent of utopian novels. But words like *fairy tale* or *magic* are even more fitting.

(Interruptions, ongoing unrest)

12 MfS = Ministerium für Staatssicherheit = Ministry for State Security = Stasi. Within the MfS, the word "Stasi" was considered derogatory and typically avoided. Only regular guard soldiers used it with a mocking undertone.

Minister for State Security:
Quiet! And you, Comrade Peters, tone down your comparisons a bit. We don't need to abandon the solid ground of Marxism-Leninism right here.

Comrade Peters:
Well, it's hard to describe. In this world you enter, certain physical laws are completely turned upside down. Some things don't work there as they do here, and then things happen that we would say are utterly impossible. You don't find that anywhere else… except in fairy tales… or ancient legends.

(Renewed unrest)

Minister for State Security:
Just keep talking!

Comrade Peters:
And the people there… well, there are people… they behave differently… very sexually charged, I'd say. Now, we could study the matter scientifically and proceed from there. But point one is that we're not the only ones who know about this phenomenon. People are secretly coming and going there. Which isn't surprising, especially because of this sexual aspect. But point two is that there are apparently more access points than just this one, and most of them are in the non-socialist world. So, you can walk in, have indecent fun, walk out in the West, laugh up your sleeve, and do it as often as you like.

Minister for State Security:
Comrade Peters, it's a catastrophe!

Comrade Peters:
We absolutely must get to the bottom of this. The problem is that this strange world is dangerous, with rather… archaic customs, and there are also very dangerous, unknown animal species. Some of our employees have been lost in unexplained ways. But above all, this world affects our employees. Often, you don't know if the comrade returns with the same mindset they had when they went in.

Minister for State Security:
And that's worse than a total loss!

Comrade Peters:
So, this strange world really does resemble fairy tales, let me continue… please, comrades… good heavens… for example, you can even fly short distances, on a broom, I must add! And that's just one example.

Interjection (Com. Möller?):
Drug intoxication? Temporary insanity? Hypnosis?

Comrade Peters:
No, that can be absolutely ruled out. Even mass hypnosis and the like. Tasks assigned beforehand, even complex ones, are completed, and so on. We must assume these are real events and a real, existing environment. So… it most resembles oriental fairy tales, especially since the temperatures there are always around 30 degrees, like our summer. But never oppressively hot, and there are no colder weather periods at all. And the physics don't add up! There are no electronic devices there; you can't even set up a simple electrical circuit. Not even precision mechanics work, and you can't take anything there, so I can't even show you photos.

Minister for State Security:
Horrific!

Comrade Peters:
All we have are reports and, at most, hand-drawn sketches made immediately upon return. But because of this idealistic, fairy-tale environment… if you send an artist there, you're practically making the fox guard the henhouse. The guy won't come back because he's too enthralled. And certain actions feel downright like magic. This broom-flying isn't the only thing—there's a house, for example, that just floats in the air without any discernible cause. Or there's a leather whip hanging in the middle of a path that lashes out if you're not careful. And it aims right for your backside.

Minister for State Security:
Comrade, please stay factual.

Comrade Peters:
But it's true! And it doesn't stop! Without any visible drive! Without an energy source!

Interjection (Com. Ludwig):
Comrade, you mentioned sexual activities?

Comrade Peters:
That would be of secondary importance if it didn't attract outsiders, though this entire strange world is indeed influenced by it. Our problem is that this aspect corrupts people. Regardless of political stance, gender, or rank and name. The few specific names of unauthorized visitors to this world we've identified so far suggest something horrific.

Minister for State Security:
No names, please! Comrades, just this much: From decadent individuals to priests, policemen, even State Security employees, all the way to the Central Committee—everyone's involved! Everyone!

Minister for State Security:
Quiet! Please continue, Comrade Peters.

Comrade Peters:
And until recently, we knew nothing about it.

Minister for State Security:
Horrific!

Comrade Peters:
To address the question about sexual activities: the moment one of our employees crosses the decisive threshold into this world, they immediately feel a change in themselves. It's as if… the sexual drive suddenly plays a major role. Not just that it's present, but it also influences thinking and actions. That's why sexual activities happen there quickly and frequently, accompanied by all sorts of perversions, especially sadomasochistic ones.

Minister for State Security:
Sadomaso… couldn't we have called it something else? It's when they spank each other's backsides and actually enjoy it.

Interjection (unattributed):
Heard this one? A masochist kneels before a sadist and begs, "Torment me, oh please torment me!" And the sadist says, "Nooooo!"

(Laughter)

Minister for State Security:
Quiet! Continue now.

Comrade Peters:
So, sadomasochism… Well, that… it could be completely irrelevant to us, their private matter. Everything else is far more significant. But it does have a strong influence on the employees—not just specific things but the sexual aspect in general. This leads to a kind of visitor traffic. You wouldn't believe how much this sexual stuff interests people. We should generally pay much more attention to this aspect in our Chekist work. But the most important thing is that the visitors are completely corrupted by it. The connection these visitors have to this world and to each other apparently far surpasses their ties to anything else.

Minister for State Security:
Listen up!

Comrade Peters:
… And so, a priest and a long-time comrade, both visitors to this world, are more loyal to each other than the one to the church or the other to the Party. Including the fact that they want to reveal absolutely nothing about this world. These visitors keep this world completely secret. Absolutely.

Minister for State Security:
We knew nothing about it all this time. Nothing!

Comrade Peters:
That's why we've gathered here today. In short: This matter will be investigated by a dedicated special group, and we need specialists from various fields for it.

Minister for State Security:
This special group will operate outwardly as a research institute. So, comrades: you'll have to part with some of your best people. I know that's not done gladly. But you must realize one thing: Marxism-Leninism crucially relies on materialism. If the comrade general secretary is giving a speech and suddenly a witch flies in on a broom, proclaiming the Golden Age, it doesn't matter if she's stark naked and holding a whip—by that fact alone, our foundations are at risk. The ideological foundations! In the end, people will ask why they should even work for socialism if there's a land of plenty somewhere where nylon stockings and Western chocolate just grow on trees!

Interjection:
Comrade Minister, are we to take this literally?

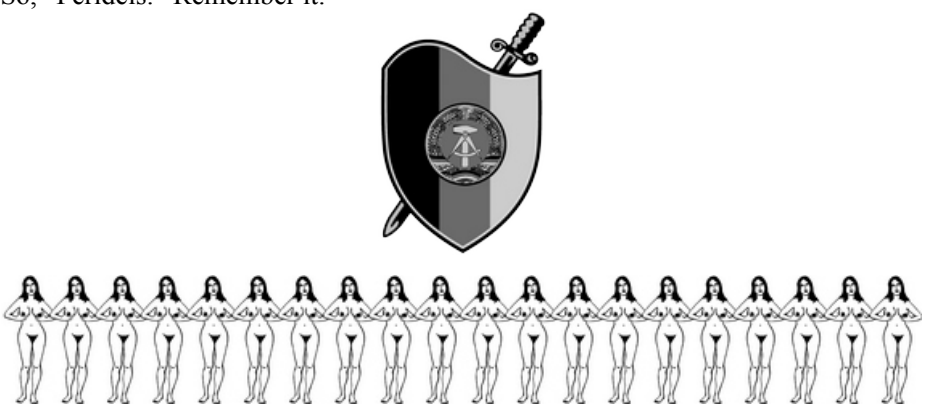
Comrade Peters:
Yes, comrades. Literally.

Minister for State Security:
The operational case for this matter is named “Peridëis.” That’s what this world is called; that’s confirmed.

Comrade Peters:
It’s supposed to mean “Land of the Fairies”, Peri is the oriental word for fairy. It’s written with two dots over the second “e” because it’s not pronounced like "waldmeister" or “leitmotiv” but like “reinprison” or “atheist.” The “e” and “i” are separate. Simplified without the dots if necessary.

Minister for State Security:
So, if you see this word in a requisition, with or without the dots, or the veiled abbreviation “Object P,” then the required resources or personnel are to be provided without objection or questions, under complete secrecy. And the work of this special unit must not be hindered. If responsibilities ever overlap, you will defer to the personnel of the “Peridëis” special unit. Otherwise, keep the matter in your head and make no personal notes. Any observations are to be reported to me personally and passed on to the special group. If something written is unavoidable, make only a single record. No copies.
That’s all. The meeting is adjourned.

Comrade Peters:
So, “Peridëis.” Remember it.



Alisha: The Story Begins

Alisha stood in the great city of Berlin before the Great Wall, which separated Color from Gray. Two streets met here at right angles, allowing one to get close to the Great Wall, as this spot couldn't simply be sealed off. Too many people passed through, including the fire brigade, whose station was less than a hundred meters away. The Beyond was very near.
On Alisha's side, everything was gray. Gray in a thousand shades, but gray nonetheless. And beyond the wall, everything was colorful, Alisha imagined, vividly colorful. Here, the houses were gray, the people gray, the daily life gray, everything gray. And dreadful music. In the gray daily life, at least.
Of course, it wasn't entirely so. Some wore blue shirts and talked the blue off the sky, others were all red, spouting red slogans, and still others were olive green, snatching green boys from school for 10 or 25 years in the army. But that wasn't colorful, not the way Alisha understood it. Colorful wasn't when everyone did the same thing the same way. Even icing becomes disgusting when you've had too much.
Alisha wanted something else. Over there, on the other side of the wall, it had to be different. Truly different. Colorful. She looked diagonally upward at the sky. The Great Wall before her demanded it. She looked until the sky blurred before her eyes ... and dreamed.

Suddenly, a "Plop" sounded in front of her. Alisha blinked. A small, motley-clad man with a jester's cap and jingling bells had just hopped over the Great Wall to her.
Do you come from over there?, asked Alisha.
No, I come from here, squeaked the little man, to tell you that here everything's colorful, but darkly colorful. So kindly find something else; no one's waiting for armpit hair, sagging breasts, and undyed head hair. And with a hop, off he went, back over the wall.
Alisha was astonished. It was none of the little guy's business what she wore under her skirt or armpits, didn't wear under her shirt, or didn't put on her hair. I don't want to anyway, she called defiantly after him. Only later did she realize the dwarf had worn nothing below and sported a rather impressive thing in the middle.
But where was the colorful world Alisha had dreamed of?

Nothing to see here, barked a uniformed man who seemed to have appeared from

nowhere. He had her show her papers. What you're looking for, you'll find elsewhere, he said, surprisingly in a half-whisper, handing back her papers. Move along, he shooed, louder now. Alisha was amazed and moved on. Only later did she notice the uniformed man had worn nothing below either. A strange day.
Drugs, by the way, weren't available in the GDR, and Alisha hadn't taken any. No datura, belladonna, henbane, or fly agaric either.
Alisha had time and let herself drift aimlessly along the street, where many people were, many cars drove, and the tram ran. After 20 or 30 minutes of strolling through the city bustle, she unexpectedly stood before a building labeled "FDJ District Office"[13] and "Youth Tourist." It was a sort of travel agency for young people, offering cheap trips that weren't half bad, sometimes to warm regions, though on this side of the Great Wall, and you needed luck and to take what came. Alisha opened the door and climbed the stairs to the indicated room. She knocked, entered, and asked, what trips to non-socialist countries are available right now?
The reader should know this question was considered cheeky.
But cheekiness, as is known, prevails.
Behind the desk sat a woman with short, permed hair, wearing a blue Dederon FDJ shirt (woven fishing line, people mocked under their breath) and a blue, dead-practical mini Silastik skirt that would turn the most decent man into a drunkard. We still have one spot for Algeria, growled the woman without looking up, but only for workers. Alisha was a worker, plain and simple, having completed a bricklayer apprenticeship with Abitur. What she did on the side as black-market work didn't count. As a member of the ruling working class, she'd more likely be admitted to medical studies than others, her father had slyly explained. But now it would also help her fly over the Great Wall, which some risked a second hole in their backside to cross. What do I need to do?, asked Alisha. – The trip costs 900 marks, growled the woman, now at least looking at her. I have that, replied Alisha. The woman yawned impressively, rose from her seat, and went to a cabinet, pulling out a form and questionnaire. Alisha noticed she wore thigh-high silk stockings with lace under her blue mini Silastik skirt, which Alisha would've loved to have and which, devil knows where, this FDJ lady had gotten, strikingly contrasting her otherwise drab attire. Alisha also thought she glimpsed some curls peeking indecently between the stockings. Can you do it right away?, asked the woman as she turned back. The trip's in three days, and you'll have a lot to sort out. I can, said Alisha. Wonderful, said the woman, actually smiling. I get a ton of trouble if spots stay empty, because these trips cost hard currency. So. You need to apply for a passport right away and

13 FDJ: Freie Deutsche Jugend = Free German Youth. The GDR unified youth organization. Membership was theoretically voluntary, but there was considerable pressure to join as a young person and certain benefits were only given if you were a member of the FDJ.

present this form to get it expedited. Do that today, no matter what. Got recent passport photos? – I do. – Perfect! And you need to go here, she wrote an address. That's the applications department around the corner at the district council, go there first. Got your ID with you? – I do. – Perfect! Once you get the stamp there, apply for the passport at Schönhauser Allee. When you have it, come back here for the travel documents. Do everything right away to make it work. She picked up the phone, dialed, and mumbled something about someone coming soon, it being urgent, and requesting expedited processing.

A strange day!, thought Alisha outside. Everything seemed different. Much more colorful! She set off for the second bureaucratic hurdle. At the district council, a cardboard sign pointed the way. "Applications Department." The department was surprisingly empty. In fact, no one was there, neither before nor behind her. Halfway up the stairs was a locked door, and to the left, a small window behind which a yawning man sat, suspiciously resembling plainclothes Stasi. Berliners had an eye for it. They always had the same generic 0815 haircuts, the same expression, and shirts and trousers so nondescript no one else would wear them. A regular clerk looked different. And when the yawning guy stood, a leather strap poked from his back pocket. Busted, thought Alisha, your Stasi badge is hanging there.
What d'you want?, he asked.
Vacation trip to Algeria, Youth Tourist, she replied.
ID with you?, he asked.
Yes, she said.
Wait, he said.
A door clattered. The guy vanished. Where to, you couldn't see through the small window.
Three minutes later: The guy reappeared with a thick questionnaire. Fill this out now and come back here, he said, pointing to a door opposite. You can sit in there.
End of communication. Alisha went to the indicated door and found a waiting room behind it. Chairs, tables, a half-dead cactus on the sill, pressed-glass ashtrays on a table, yellowish curtains, neon light, red floral velour wallpaper, a cardboard picture of Erich Honecker on the wall. No pen, Alisha went back to the guy behind the window.
Might you have a pen?, she asked.
Growling. A pen was slid through the narrow opening at the window's base.
Writing with the half-dried pen wasn't easy. They wanted to know if she had Western relatives (unknown), if she'd been a Nazi or SS member (she wasn't born yet), where she'd traveled abroad (Poland, Czechoslovakia), occupation, education, workplaces, relatives ... now she was stuck and returned to the guy

behind the glass. Sorry, I don't have everything in my head..., she said.
Fill out what you know, put question marks where you don't, he said.
Then I'm done, she said.
Could've said so, hand it over, he said. He took the stack, flipped through it briefly, and vanished again. This time, Alisha waited longer. All clear so far, he said upon returning. Now to the registry office, bring two passport photos, rest is handled internally, check back with Youth Tourist tomorrow morning.
Alisha's thoughts had wandered, as had her gaze. She noticed a suspicious bulge in the guy's trousers. Not him, she thought, he'd need major upgrades before I'd take him even in emergencies. An astonishing day.

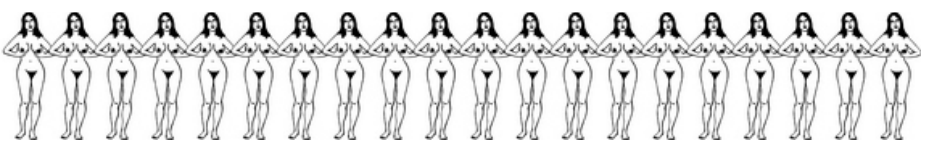
The rest went smoothly too, she got her passport expedited, the all-important exit stamp inside, the necessary papers from the Youth Tourist agency, and finally the flight details. She'd fly alone, change planes in Algiers, and be met at the destination airport. Everything moved so fast, with a few things still needed, she didn't even get to brag to her friends. But they were all on summer vacation anyway – Mecklenburg, Baltic Sea, lakes, Bulgaria, Hungary, whatever. No matter. Note to parents: Hi Mom, got a Youth Tourist trip to the West (Algeria), departure, arrival, have a great summer, your Alisha. Sealed, addressed, stamped, into the mailbox. Picked up a few more travel essentials on the way back. Packed the few necessary things, a backpack, that was enough, dug out the passport for the hundredth time, stared at the unbelievable stamp (it didn't vanish), and then it was time. Everything was done. Tomorrow at dawn, it would begin. It was unreal. Unimaginable. Abstract. How many hours left? Too many. Read something to pass the time? Wouldn't work. Luckily, Alisha felt leaden fatigue rising. It had been a lot. One last trip down half the stairs to the bathroom, back up, undress. Wash? Yes, she was sticky. So a quick full-body wash in the kitchen, plastic bowl of water, scrubbing blissfully from head to toe with the washcloth, done, dry off. Clothes in hand, naked back to her room. Set the alarm. Alarm! Alisha checked three times if it was set right, if it would ring. Then she fell into bed and a deep, dreamless sleep. ... And woke just before the alarm, refreshed! Quick leftover breakfast, a coffee, and off. Schönhauser Allee S-Bahn station, a forty-five-minute ride, five hundred meters on foot to the airport, far too early. Wait. Heart pounding. There, finally! Algiers was displayed.
They let her through passport control without issue. An oppressive feeling, but they let her through. They let her board the plane without issue. The plane took off without issue. It crossed the Great Wall without issue.
Now, it seemed, the miracle had happened.
The gray lay behind her, and above, the blue sky shone.
Alisha sank back with a sigh, suddenly completely relaxed. Utterly relaxed. More relaxed than ever. It was that simple. She had no intention of choosing the

unknown over the known and running off forever. But she wanted to soak up color, lots of color. Then she could cope with the daily gray. But only gray wouldn't do. Fun was part of life, fun was a must. Speaking of fun and life, in the recent frenzy, there'd been no proper moment for it. Her right hand slipped under her skirt, where the current relaxation had caused some slippery moisture. Now, truly now, she felt like some fun and more relaxation, just to ease the slipperiness. She'd done it before! No, probably not, the man to her right wasn't distracted enough. Later, then. Or maybe? She glanced covertly right, no, better not. She remained a polite, proper passenger and later chewed through the not-so-great meal the stewardesses handed out.

Alisha hadn't gotten a university spot after Abitur. Teacher for civics and history was still open, and civil engineering had been offered. Neither was her dream, and she declined. But she didn't complain about her life. Last year, she'd worked at a restaurant cloakroom, as it offered tips, no hassle beyond the job, and otherwise left her free. A friend had suggested working as a private photo model. The dwarf had been right about her lack of grooming (armpit hair, natural head hair, sagging breasts). Was that dwarf real or just a dream? Alisha began to believe in his reality but liked herself as she was, and judging by men's reactions, it all seemed worth existing. She didn't need to chase photo gigs; photographers came to her. No open-thigh shots or anything, it was all decent, and Alisha enjoyed the focused attention on her body, got good money, and the photographers were usually kind enough to send prints of the best shots. One, for an overseas job, had even taken a few extra, slightly risqué photos, slipping her 50 West German marks on top, unagreed. Alisha was tempted to quit the cloakroom job but was warned they could nab her as an "Assi." Asocial behavior, §249 StGB, up to two years in jail, so Alisha stayed at the cloakroom a few hours each evening. Hardly heavy labor, and her colleagues were great pals. Add the sewing machine, and Alisha felt well-off for GDR standards.

And now they'd even let her go to the West.

Below, a mountain range came into view. She'd have to think about what to make of her life. But not now. Now was vacation, and Alisha wanted to savor every moment. She leaned back. I'd take another coffee, she said to the stewardess.



Institute for Special Physics (Object P)

Comrades, I welcome you here at Object P, and I'm sorry you've been torn from your old posts and shipped off to this miserable dump. If it were up to me, I'd have stayed in Berlin too. But the work here is of utmost importance. And crucially: everything we're dealing with is to be kept absolutely secret, down to the tiniest detail. More than usual! What we're investigating and shielding touches the very foundations of our social order. Nothing must leak out.

To the outside world, we operate under the cover of the "Institute for Special Physics," which deals with specialized fundamental physics research and experiments. If anyone asks, you say you work in administration or something similar and have no clue about the research. Any such inquiries must be reported immediately and as precisely as possible—names, place, time, and so on—so we can follow up.

He placed a topographic map on the table. Not a standard printed edition, but one hand-drawn with ink and later supplemented with numerous additions. A stamp

TOP SECRET

adorned the top right corner of the map.

Look here. This is the institute building we're in right now. And this is the area that forms the focus of our activities. All restricted territory. It's about four by four kilometers, mixed forest with clearings and numerous hills, and a wetland. The restricted area is enclosed by a simple fence and guarded militarily by an assigned unit of the guard regiment. Thirty-five men, standard duty protocol, nothing special. The comrades in this unit don't know what's going on here. The cover story is that they're guarding a contaminated hazard zone. Their access and their duty post are on the opposite side of the area… here.

He tapped the map.

Contact with the guard unit is to be avoided. Only our duty officer has contact with their duty officer. Let me remind you: every comrade needs to know only what is absolutely necessary for their immediate duties. So, no deconspiration here either, please. And here, comrades, within the restricted area, is a separately fenced zone with a diameter of just under three kilometers, which will soon be additionally secured with a high-voltage fence. This is the zone in question. No one may enter the zone, and no one may see it! That must be completely ensured —drill that into your heads. Exceptions for specific reasons can only be approved by me personally. For this, there's a concrete path with a separate entrance from

our side, secured by our own personnel, as shown here on the map. The guard unit has no access. Beyond the inner entrance, the path ends. It's just wilderness, thickets, because we can't risk unnecessary activity inside the zone. Things happen there… unpredictable… inexplicable… and you risk life and limb if you're careless and don't watch out. Imagine a nitroglycerin factory exploded, and nitroglycerin is still scattered around. Or a nerve gas factory exploded, with rusted nerve gas canisters lying about. Or picture hidden cables sticking out of the ground, all charged with a thousand volts. And maybe swamps, unknown organisms, deep pits, corrosive substances, and who knows what else. Unpredictable, uncontrollable, inexplicable—in short: dangerous.
He wiped sweat from his brow.
And we don't even know the entire area fully, comrades. What we're securing and investigating is… well… a kind of physical anomaly that can't be explained with current scientific knowledge. Not yet, I emphasize! This presents great opportunities for us, but also great dangers. The main danger is that the enemy could infiltrate and gain insights before we do. Since the phenomena in the zone involve unknown physical properties, they could yield strategically critical breakthroughs at any moment—ones that could deliver a fatal blow to us. Compare it to the development of the atomic bomb in 1945, if you will. Unknown variables! Hence the caution. Of course, the zone itself could pose dangers, but that's less significant because it's less likely. And naturally, we could gain insights ourselves. However, anything incompatible with the Marxist-Leninist worldview must be dismissed. Where such things are observed, restraint is required until we have clarification—an explanation we can present to people that's believable, whether true or not. It simply won't do for fairy tales to happen somewhere, where anyone can just stroll in and make a wish. And it would be dangerous if that were possible. Even a credible rumor about it is practically a catastrophe. And comrades! I mention this because it's within the realm of possibility that something like this exists here. There are indications of it. Our task, therefore, is to get this under control, investigate it, assess its usability, and avert dangers. Secrecy takes precedence over usability. Smoke break!

Comrades, I'll now describe, as far as necessary, what's going on here and what's happened so far. Aerial photos are useless because the objects we're interested in simply don't show up. The relevant spots are always overexposed, blurry, or show something else entirely. Magnetic tape recordings are completely noisy—we've tried everything. Even helicopters can't get close; the equipment malfunctions. And from higher altitudes, you see different things than up close. It's infuriating! So, explorations must be done on foot. And here, he pointed to a spot in the center of the restricted area on the map, is the key. There's a grassy sand dune with a partially collapsed building remnant at its base, leading to a dilapi-

dated staircase going underground. Then a short tunnel, a few ruined cellar rooms, and at the end, an intact room built of fieldstones. A few more steps down, and in the center is a large boulder with a carved relief image. A sort of female figure, but that's irrelevant. The special thing is: you can't touch this boulder in the usual sense—you just pass right through it. You can even walk into it. So, it's some kind of illusion, an unknown phenomenon, or an unfamiliar technology. Attempts to dig around it, to the right or left, have failed. With fatalities. As if struck by a powerful electric shock. Attempts with long manipulators always led to their destruction. The same with surface excavations. Active and passive measurements have so far yielded no meaningful results due to massive interference. Plus, any activity within the core zone is inherently life-threatening.

He took a breath and wiped sweat from his forehead with a handkerchief.

He continued: We've lost 18 comrades in the zone so far… every step must be carefully considered. If only the damned zone were at least somewhat predictable… but no, a hazard you identify today might be harmless tomorrow, while a seemingly safe spot could burn your ass the next day. You have to move as if you're in unknown territory every time.

Moving on. If you walk into this boulder, you enter a large chamber. And now it gets completely crazy—you can only proceed further alone. Any objects, including clothes, any kind of technology, even a simple pebble, are not allowed through; we've tested this extensively. And that's not all—you don't emerge on the other side of the boulder, on the other side of the dune, but in a completely unknown region that can't be linked to any known place on Earth. Something like another dimension, as you might know from science fiction stories. Inconceivably vast, possibly even infinite.

Loud murmurs.

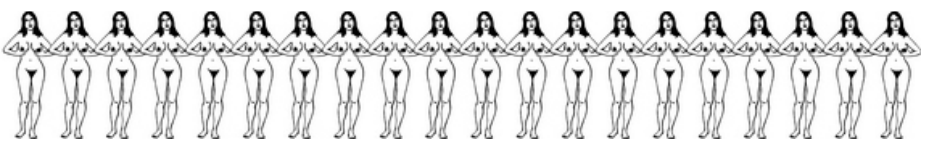
Quiet! Further: Even time goes haywire. Spend twelve hours on the other side, and you return after roughly one hour. Always. Time there is stretched about 1:12, without you realizing it.

We've therefore gathered all available relevant literature—from socialist and non-socialist countries, historical sources, academic books, and stories—everything we could get. It's all freely available in the library. If you need something, let us know; we'll get it. But take this "other dimension" only as a theory, an example. We don't know what it really is. It's real, no illusions, that much is certain. Passing through this boulder isn't inherently life-threatening, as far as we know—unlike the surrounding zone—but only very select individuals can be sent in, because the boulder, or the other dimension, call it what you will, has a significant impact on the personality of the comrade involved. This calls for Chekist toughness[14]. And I warn you, we're not joking—none of you are to go

14 Cheka: Russian: ВЧК, the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission. Lenin's secret police, the precursor to the Ministry for State Security. Later GPU, NKVD, and KGB.

through there yourselves. If I catch anyone, it'll cost two full months' pay, no exceptions, even if your vacation's coming up! Only select inofficial employees (IMs[15]) are eligible for this task, never full-time staff. And those chosen as cadres to go in must be thoroughly supported and monitored afterward. Support here means the five big ***W***s: ***W***ellness, ***W***affle, ***W***omen, ***w***hat ever you ***w***ant. We don't skimp here; the funds are approved and available. The main thing is they don't run off. So pamper them and be lenient. But don't forget control. The key question in our organization is always "Who is who?" and we can't afford for comrades to be turned in this other dimension without us knowing. That's why we use unofficial informants, not full-time staff, and as much as possible, *without* them knowing exactly what's going on. There have been unexplained losses and betrayals, hence this precaution. In this other dimension, we're not just dealing with conditions that seem very… well… idealistic to people without a firm class standpoint, but also with a very high state of sexual arousal and corresponding experiences there. All of this can act like a powerful drug, creating such a strong dependency that everything else fades into the background for these people, leading to disloyalty or even betrayal. And this seductive or drug-like effect, if I may call it that, can become more important to them than anything we've offered so far. It's even stronger than Western TV on the Saxons.
Laughter.
Comrades, it's true, you'll have to excuse me. So let it be said: Never go through that boulder yourselves. Where official forces are needed, we have special comrades from Berlin conducting Marxist and other research there.
We limit ourselves to instructing, deploying, supporting, and monitoring the IMs according to our guidelines, as well as collecting and interpreting information. You'll be thoroughly trained on how to move as safely as possible within the zone and decontaminated afterward to prevent the spread of any hazardous substances. I urgently warn you against bringing *anything* out of the zone that hasn't been explicitly ordered. That's highly dangerous, politically explosive, and will be treated as treason and sabotage, with corresponding consequences.
And one more problem: The boulder is underground, so theoretically undetectable, but that doesn't mean much. We need to investigate whether there are people in this area who knew about the boulder before we did. There are indications that this is the case. That's the last point for today. Tomorrow, general training on the specifics and findings regarding the zone begins, and for selected comrades, gradual explorations of the object with experienced comrades will follow.

15 IM: Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter = Inofficial employee. These were the underground agents of the Stasi, whose work for the Stasi was only allowed to be known to very few official employees. Even in the secret Stasi files, they were only referred to by their code names. Most of them worked for the Stasi out of conviction and were not paid for it.



Alisha: Journey to Paradise

The Flight and the Arrival

In the Algerian capital Algiers, Alisha had to change planes. At the airport, people helped her unprompted to find the connecting flight. It was a much smaller propeller plane with few passengers. The flight felt like an overland bus ride, landing multiple times and emptying out, until finally she was alone with the stewardess in the passenger cabin. Now would have been a chance to give her loins some long-overdue relief, as the stewardess was seated somewhere upfront and wouldn't have seen. But the monotonous hum of the engines and the intense heat were soporific. And since there was nothing below but desert with little variety, fatigue won, and Alisha fell asleep.

When the stewardess woke her, Alisha felt well-rested. Below, she saw desert mountains with bizarre shapes and colors, and paths traced on the ground. She accepted a drink. Meanwhile, the plane gradually lost altitude and began its landing. A tiny airport, a few palms, a few small buildings, not much.

The stewardess flipped open the small passenger plane's outer door and lowered the gangway. It jammed slightly, requiring a kick to fix. A hot gust of air swept in. Outside, the air shimmered over the runway, a simple strip. A hundred meters away stood the airport building. Hope you enjoy your stay, droned the stewardess, yawning. To Alisha, though, the "stay" sounded like "stay for ever." No small question for a young woman from the deep provinces of the GDR, unexpectedly granted a trip to the western south. The answer to this wordplay could wait; first, she had to deal with the here and now.

She stood alone at the strange airport, as no one else was there to disembark with her. Behind her, the gangway flipped up, and the door closed. She turned and watched the plane take off, its outline dissolving in the desert sky's shimmer. Finally, Alisha slung her backpack onto her shoulders, faced the airport building again, and set off.

Strange. No one was to be seen. Not here either. Far and wide, nothing. The airport building turned out to be half a ruin, with a splendidly painted door on the right side as its only splash of color.

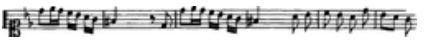
Alisha headed toward it.

When she opened the door, she was in for a surprise. The interior of this part of the building, though not large, was fully intact, the floor tastefully tiled with

mosaics, and the walls adorned with finely carved, fragrant wood. Beyond that, an inner courtyard with benches, chairs, tables, many plants, and a not-so-small pool with a fountain. One could even smell the water's presence.
Much better. Far better!
That wasn't all: just five meters away stood a good-looking, no, beautiful, no, heart-wrenchingly beautiful man of middle age. By Alisha's estimate, as he looked slightly older than her. And he stood there as if waiting precisely for her. But why not – she seemed to be the only other person here. Now her loins woke up too, having slept a bit longer than Alisha herself.
Between her and these beauties (man and room), however, a passport control point blocked the way. Two waist-high wooden doors in sequence, and between them one of those man-high wooden booths where control officers sit, glassed from waist up.
Kommense, kommense[16]!, boomed a muffled voice, astonishingly in German, from the glass booth.
A buzz sounded, and the first barrier let her open it. As she stepped in and stood directly before the glass, her astonishment grew: inside sat a passport officer in exactly the uniform she'd seen at departure in the GDR and countless times before: that gray-green uniform jacket so tied to German soldiers since the last war, and on his head the matching cap. But wait, there was a difference. Instead of the cockade with the GDR symbols – hammer, compass, and wreath of ears – a symbol like a stylized woman adorned the cap's front, though Alisha had no time to examine it closely. What kind of odd officer was this, speaking German?
Pass bitte!, came the confirmation, slightly Saxon-accented, from the booth.
She slid her passport through the slot, the officer gave her a sharp look, then immersed himself in activities sadly invisible from outside.
Passieren bitte!, he finally announced, the passport slid back through the slot, and the second waist-high door buzzed to be opened. Alisha sighed in relief. These controls were always oppressive. And this time, confusing too.
The man approached her.
Welcome!, he beamed. I'm, so to speak, your guide (Alisha's loins fully awoke), though honestly, I'm here for the first time too. At least, exactly here. At this ... airport. But I have, besides what else I can do, a heap of hints and advice, and also a jeep we'll drive on with later. He hesitated slightly. And I'm supposed to ... look after.
It was unmistakable that he'd omitted something. And?, asked Alisha, raising an eyebrow.
I'm to keep my hands off you and tell you verbatim they'll castrate me if I do, he

16 Kommense: Actually: Kommen Sie! = Come on! - American filmmakers can make a note of this so that German soldiers in American films don't always just have to say: Los! Los! Na los!

said, his face reddening.
Alisha laughed. Might I have a say in that?, she asked.
No, he said, his face growing even redder.
And what's your name?, she asked.
Can't say, he replied, his blush reaching the maximum conceivable. It's not my fault. I can only tell you a few things, I'm to eat shoe soles if your food runs low, and I'm liable with ... with ... with important things if anyone harms a hair on your head.
He paused. Come along first. There's something to take care of, he said.
The room had several doors, and he now turned to one of them. He glanced back: Come! As Alisha approached, he knocked on the door. She's here, he said, in German.



The Examination

The man beckoned Alisha inside, and she entered the room. He followed, closed the door, and stood just inside it.
On the opposite side of the room, Alisha saw a kind of podium table, behind which five people sat, three men and two women. They appeared to come from entirely different countries and continents, judging by their looks, and three wore doctor's coats. In the center of the room stood a gynecological examination chair, positioned so that a woman seated on it would display her most private area toward the conference table. To the left, against the wall, was an ordinary chair, and on the right wall, a sort of wooden frame whose purpose Alisha couldn't fathom. In the back right corner stood something like a lab table with a microscope, various instruments, and assorted boxes and utensils.
Heartfelt welcome, said the man sitting in the middle of the conference table, sporting an impressive full beard and flashing a dazzling smile. I have an important, a decisive question first. If you answer "No" in a moment, you'll be arranged an interesting vacation with nothing to regret. Nothing! With stunning desert landscapes, beautiful oases, people, bazaars, everything this land and its people offer, including pocket money. But that would only be a consolation prize, because we have reason to suspect you might find something else far more interesting.
But you don't even know me, stammered Alisha, confused.
Oh, we know you fairly well, replied the bearded man, smiling, otherwise you wouldn't be here. Those who make it this far are, in a way ... already somewhat ... chosen. Do you want to hear what I have to ask?, he said.
Yes!, exclaimed Alisha.
I won't make too many words. For now, just this, hold your breath, it's

significant: What you're offered here is the chance of a lifetime, a chance only very few ever get or have gotten. What awaits you is magnificent, so magnificent it surpasses anything you could ever imagine in your life. I'm not exaggerating! But everyone must and may decide for themselves: Do you think you could handle an environment where sexuality plays a central role in everyday life, where much of social life is regulated through it? And importantly, it includes being ... well, I'd say ... taken now and then without much asking?, he asked.
Alisha swallowed. There was a lot in that question. She asked for clarification, raising an eyebrow: So, something like ... being at a party where everyone's a bit tipsy, hanging out naked and fooling around, and suddenly someone gives me one?
Everyone at the table laughed.
Something like that, answered the bearded man. Though the rules also apply the other way around, so it's just as permitted and, above all, normal for a woman to take a man.
How's that supposed to work, asked Alisha, aren't men usually much stronger than women?
But easier to win over, replied one of the women at the podium table, often it's enough to wiggle your breasts a bit and grab his cock, and you've got your fuck in the bag. Oh, sorry, please.
Alisha blushed.
And, added the woman, it doesn't just happen in fantasy, it's not only formally allowed, but it's actually done.
Alisha instantly felt wet between her legs. It was a thing with morality. One observed it, demanded it, but suddenly realized that deep in the archaic recesses of the mind, something entirely different was desired than what the rational, accessible part of the mind allowed. So Alisha asked aloud, more to herself:
Isn't that immoral?
What is morality?, countered the woman. It's a *different* morality. You could just as well say it's immoral to deny people the fulfillment of basic needs. Why is it more moral to show people being killed in a movie but ban the depiction of a happy sexual act at the end of a love story? – It probably comes from the need to embed procreation, pregnancy, and child-rearing, along with the woman's provision, in a secure, defined environment. So far, so sensible. But what if unwanted pregnancies can be reliably prevented? And if society provides a secure environment for a woman with children? In that case, this morality is essentially void. However, it's worth noting that species with constant sexuality also have constant partnerships, so to speak, that constant sexuality creates the institution of marriage in the first place. Animals with cyclic sexuality almost never stay together longer, and the young are usually raised by one parent alone, almost always the female. If it's different in species with constant sexuality, it suggests

sexuality isn't just for reproduction and pleasure but also the glue of marriage. I can't dismiss this point, the bonding function of sexuality, and I even want to emphasize that evolution or God, whichever you prefer, has anchored deep in our subconscious that we fulfill the only purpose life has – to create more life. Life has no other purpose, though one could imagine that childless people fulfill their own roles, like protection, creating frameworks, regulation, or whatever. Otherwise, it wouldn't explain why, for example, young men (she glanced with a laugh in her eyes at the incredibly handsome man standing diagonally behind Alisha) are so keen to constantly risk their lives and health, which only subsides in their late twenties. Perhaps they're the defenders of the child-bearing people. Or why some people are homosexual. Maybe the species needs a portion of people unburdened by children? Anyway. Keep in mind that a steady, reliable man in a cozy, bourgeois marriage with a toddler under the Christmas tree can trigger intense happiness, and menopause comes faster than you think. So if you say "Yes," don't just live for the moment, but think ahead too. What we offer isn't only possible when you're unattached and childless. I, for example, have been happily married for 20 years and have three children.

As the woman finished, the bearded man took the floor again: Alisha, the special place you can go to is very old; not hundreds, but thousands of years old, probably much older. But it has always been kept strictly secret. Only legends speak of it, but many. Are you eager to experience these legends, at the price of embracing a completely different morality, including opening your body to others? Or do you have questions before you answer?, he asked.

N-no, answered Alisha, stuttering in confusion. And hastily: I mean only about the questions.

Alisha swallowed again, her gaze fell on the gynecological examination chair, she hesitated, but finally straightened herself and said, red-faced but with a firm voice:

Yes, I want to.

It was too enticing.

Good, said the bearded man. You should also know that *nothing* here will be *in any way* dangerous for you. Perhaps unfamiliar, difficult, exhausting, embarrassing, maybe even painful at times, but bearable, never truly dangerous. That's ensured. And there's a special reason you're here. Now ... there's this certain sexual dimension. That you're here has nothing to do with having pretty breasts and a pretty butt – which you do – but with what moves you deep inside, truly moves you. Even in the layers of your psyche you're not yet aware of. That's why you were chosen and no one else. Not because you like to devour boys (Alisha blushed again), but because you're ready to allow archaic sides of yourself, to explore them, and, of course, because you have those specific archaic sides. You have a predestination, and someone paved the way for you here because of it. No

one else would have gotten this journey, and you would have ended up here sooner or later, one way or another. So once again: Welcome!
And now undress.
Alisha hesitated. Not that after her "Yes" it wasn't to be expected at some point. And not that she hadn't undressed for doctors before, but this situation was different, somehow more humiliating. These five people, this examination chair, and the handsome man standing behind her, not asked to leave for the examination.
Undress.
She hadn't flown over the Great Wall, stepped out of the gray, come all the way to the middle of the desert, and said "Yes" to turn back now. Almost an absurd thought, given how far she'd already gone. And then this thing with the special selection... The plane was long gone, it crossed her mind. But what if something was off here? What if the state had sold her, a pretty European, for hard currency to a rich desert sheikh for his harem and perverse desires[17]? – Nonsense, she thought, they couldn't make her disappear without a trace. Or could they? No, absurd, that could have been done more easily without all this effort. And if it was a rich sheikh? Alisha's pussy unpromptedly signaled that a pile of jewels and gems (she'd be showered with) plus intensive care from a fairy-tale prince wouldn't feel bad. Alisha's reason countered that one needed freedom too, and not every prince was perfect. A prince is a prince, her pussy argued back. Moments later, reason admitted her real freedom usually moved within a well-lit concrete enclosure, with neither wild orgies nor gold (not even for wedding rings). Her pussy agreed, and both informed Alisha of the vote's outcome.
So Alisha gave herself a jolt and went to the chair against the left wall. Backpack on the floor, jacket hung over the chair, shirt draped over it, shoes in front of the chair, skirt on the chair. Her white undershirt and panties remained. She took a breath, grabbed the undershirt, pulled it over her head, and finally shed her panties.
Come here, they said.
Alisha approached the conference table. One of the two women, a doctor, stood and stepped from behind the podium table. She had black hair combed strictly back, seemed resolute but not unkind. She took a stethoscope from her coat pocket and listened to Alisha's chest. She also looked into her mouth, eyes, and ears, tapped, checked with her hand, and finally grasped her breasts, as a gynecologist would. This, however, she did much longer and more thoroughly, and Alisha sensed the attention of the others at the table growing. Unobtrusive, normally developed, nullipara, resting mamma, the woman noted, returning to her

17 Alisha falls for a cliché here: Reports of European women abducted into Arabian harems are false but were a popular theme in erotic women's fiction in the past. Most famous is the 1919 bestseller *The Sheik* by Edith Maude Hull.

seat. The second doctor, a man, now stood. That means: You've never given birth, and your breast gives no milk, he murmured to her. – I'll now take some blood, don't worry, it's quick. He pricked her finger, took the blood sample to the lab table in the corner, and immersed himself in examining it. Meanwhile, the third doctor had risen and gently guided Alisha to the gynecological chair: Come, sit down. Alisha sat in the chair. The two doctors spread her legs and placed them over the supports. To Alisha's great surprise, a mechanism snapped around her ankles, so she couldn't stand if she wanted to. As if that weren't enough, her wrists were now similarly restrained. Don't be afraid, said the female doctor, remember: That you were chosen has to do with you, and nothing serious will happen to you.

As if this weren't serious!

But after everything that had already happened, they'd probably need to redefine what counted as a serious event. Yet that wasn't all; Alisha felt this humiliating situation somehow aroused her, directly in the sexual sense. Perhaps because something was still on the to-do list, or because that heartbreakingly beautiful man stood behind her, assigned solely to her but, sadly, unavailable for secret things. What was happening in Alisha must have been glaringly obvious as a wet swelling, especially to the doctors, who surely understood the anatomical events around her exposed middle opening. How embarrassing! Which only amplified the effect. And everyone was now looking where the embarrassment was happening. Throbbing and wet. Not everyone, the doctor at the lab table only now rose, approached her, and said, quite redundantly, stay calm, girl, carefully inserting a swab into her vagina, then another, and another, before returning to his lab table to examine them somehow.

So Alisha lay like an exhibit with an open gate facing the podium. No one seemed to find anything unusual about it. Nor about her vulva being maximally swollen and glistening with wetness.

Alisha, said the bearded man, who wasn't a doctor, this examination is less a check than a protection for you. If, for example, something is found, we first ensure you're healthy. We have wonderful means for that. And we also want to know what we might need to consider with you. But a little bit, this kind of ... test ... is also a ritual preserved over time. Each of us here was in the same situation, but each of us is also accustomed to this "glimpse into paradise" (he emphasized the phrase), like, say, looking at a blooming rose. Pretty to behold. He turned to the lab table, how far are you?, he asked.

Done, came the reply, everything clear, wonderful, no pregnancy, nothing else. He stood and approached Alisha: Your vulva responds well, he said, some women will envy you for that. Now relax and don't resist. He spread gel around his entire right hand and, very skillfully but firmly, slowly and steadily entered Alisha's vagina. Don't push against it, he said, relax completely, lean back. He went

further inside. It wasn't a sensation of hitting something, as Alisha had feared, but an incredible stretching that momentarily took her breath away. But only at the entrance of her vagina. Deep inside, it was as if her body yielded willingly or had always had room for a whole man's hand. Alisha gripped the armrests and pressed her spread feet downward with full force. The doctor eased slightly, bringing Alisha immense relief. Look here, he said kindly, pulling a mirror from his pocket. This is how far we've gotten. Alisha saw that nearly his entire hand had disappeared inside her. And this didn't quite match the relief she felt when the pressure eased. Amazing what was possible! Now try to relax completely, don't tense up, stay loose, yes, that's nice. Alisha let it happen. The doctor turned his hand slightly, intense stretching, unbelievably intense stretching, Haaaaaaaaaa, relief, he was fully inside. The others clapped applause, including the incredibly handsome man. Well done, he murmured to her. The situation was absurd, utterly absurd. A man's hand was practically shoved into her pussy in public, and the audience applauded. Another astonishing day. But now it didn't matter; she'd let it run its course. Her mother always said, "Once your reputation's ruined, you live quite unburdened," and claimed Alisha was worse than her. But the absurdity of the moment flipped her tension, and Alisha grew cheerful. Fine, she thought, here I sit with a pussy wide as a barn door, a man's hand inside, and I could get upset or make something of it. I could've stayed home to stay proper. Long live the improper. With a sigh, she relaxed her muscles and sank into the chair's padding. Look here again, said the doctor in front of her. Alisha leaned forward and looked into the mirror he held in his left hand. She saw his hand completely vanished inside her, her vagina encircling his wrist. I'll now massage a bit, said the doctor. The sensation wasn't uninteresting, but he was unfortunately too quick, a palpation of the cervix and vaginal interior followed, then he withdrew his hand swiftly but not too fast. Amazing what's possible, thought Alisha, also that her vagina closed quickly, as if nothing had happened. Only her arousal, sadly, hadn't subsided and was becoming serious torment. Pleasurable, but torment.

The two doctors now unstrapped her from the chair and helped her stand.

Now come over here, they said.

They led Alisha to the strange wooden frame on the right side of the room. She was pressed forward against a vertical board with padding at head height and a cutout at breast level. Again, her wrists and ankles were restrained, but this time her hips were strapped tightly too. The female doctor placed a black cloth blindfold over Alisha's eyes and head, so she could see nothing. To Alisha, she said: You react differently when you can't see. The blindfold will be removed later, don't worry, relax, you don't need to do anything – others will do what's needed. Alisha felt her breasts pulled through the board's openings. Hands checked if the restraints were secure and adjusted her feet's position. Alisha felt

the board tilt slightly forward, perhaps 45°, maybe less, but not fully horizontal, and she lay very comfortably. Now she heard the doctor speak: What comes next usually feels very pleasant. Surrender to the sensation and relax completely. It will take about 30 minutes, and we won't ask you questions or demand anything, so you can truly relax. Best close your eyes and dream away.
Music began to play, not exactly quiet but not too loud, filling the room. The melody recalled oriental sounds, but not quite, with instruments Alisha didn't recognize, rhythmic yet soothingly steady, sounds one could surrender to. Definitely danceable, yet meditative music. Incredibly good music, Alisha found. And as it was pleasantly warm, she managed to relax.
Meanwhile, two hands grasped her slightly dangling breasts through the board's opening, rubbed them all around with an oil (it felt like it), and began massaging them. Extraordinarily skillfully massaging them. Alisha growled with pleasure. She'd happily indulge in this treatment daily. The hands reached the breast roots under her armpits, fingers probed into the breast structures without being rough, and massaged them through. Thus, the probing, feeling, massaging fingers journeyed around her breasts, finding numerous spots awaiting release, making spiral circles around the breast until nearing the nipples. Now came something that confused Alisha momentarily before she adjusted; the fingers began, at her nipples, no, slightly behind toward the areolas, well ... milking movements, alternating left-right, left-right, first reaching into the areolas and then rolling toward the nipples. Left-right, left-right, left-right, the rhythm blended with the music. Alisha started to get used to the sensation, left-right, left-right, left-right, always in time with the music, but as if the music was written for milking her breasts, not the milking adapted to the music. Feels interesting, Alisha noted. Hm, maybe more than interesting, she thought later. Actually, even more than more than interesting. Has to be, added her mind, they're erogenous zones. And they're erogenous zones to motivate women to give milk, her mind continued. Damn, she wasn't a dairy cow! But it felt quite nice... Do cows come to milking willingly because of this? Utterly depraved creatures? Hmmmmmm, the milking hands drew her into the sensations. It happened to her; it was no longer herself, the feeling forced itself upon her relentlessly. Left-right, left-right. Oh, what the hell, thought Alisha weakly, so I'm a dairy cow, as long as they fiddle with me for the promised half-hour. Relaxing, this was. Very relaxing. Left-right, left-right. Alisha felt something building in her loins. Alisha, she thought, you're not about to have an orgasm, are you? Left-right, left-right, the rhythm imposed itself mercilessly, and restrained as she was, she had no way to escape it. Left-right, left-right, the feeling in her loins grew stronger, left-right, left-right, it began radiating through her body, steadily intensifying. Pleasure zones emerged in her breasts, gradually filling them, spreading from back to front until reaching the nipples' tips ... and finally, the pent-up energy exploded from her loins as a

powerful orgasm, unmistakable through Alisha's loud scream. It wasn't a sharp, brief peak but a slow, mighty surge, forcing itself upon her, allowing no resistance. Another surge came, with left-right, left-right in between, the rhythm relentlessly continued. Alisha exhaled heavily, yet left-right, left-right, the hands on her breasts didn't relent. A surge paused, lifting Alisha to a swaying height where she lingered, left-right, left-right, she was a dairy cow being milked. Alisha floated atop a blissful surge, far from all turbulence, doing nothing, responsible for nothing, letting it happen, letting others act, letting others think. The surge held, rose, and Alisha sank into the powerful cloud that swept the world away, gently cradling her. Alisha slipped into a daze, left-right, left-right, dairy cows don't need to work. She nearly fell asleep, but the promised half-hour was finally over, the hands briefly massaged her breasts through, shook them out, and – smack! – a firm slap on her bottom brought her back to reality. Ouch! But the stinging bottom woke her.

You make one quite jealous, laughed the female doctor as she removed Alisha's blindfold and released her. The one who milked you is, by the way, a renowned master of his craft and is here only for you.

Alisha blushed (yet again).

Don't be ashamed, said the doctor, your reaction was as hoped and will help you greatly later. I can reveal one more thing: Had you refused, you'd have gotten your trip plus a stay at one of those freer vacation spots where certain boundaries are crossed, so you wouldn't be disappointed. But since you went along with our little test, you get more ... what we promised, the grand prize. She winked at Alisha. Don't ask now, you'll understand soon. But to the practical: From now on, you'll receive such breast massages seven times a day for a while, and if you want to do yourself a favor, do it several times daily when alone, roughly as you just experienced; it works well without oil by hand. You don't have to, but it would be helpful. Do you guess why?, she asked.

Not entirely, admitted Alisha. It feels like ... and it sounds like milk should come from my breast. But that's nonsense ... right?

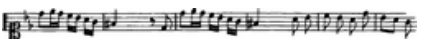
No, not nonsense. In principle, any woman can produce milk without pregnancy. During pregnancy, much glandular tissue is built up. That's, in principle, the only difference. But milk production itself happens on demand. When milk is needed, signaled to the breast by regular sucking, it responds with milk production. Whether there was a pregnancy before or not. But a breast with many glands can give much milk, and one with few, less. Since demand drives supply, even a breast without prior pregnancy can gradually produce more milk. That's why, for example, in original cultures, a grandmother can co-nurse, or a sister of a deceased mother can step in. We so-called civilized people no longer know this, but nature intended it. In your case, Alisha, you'll need to be able to give milk. Does that shock you a bit?, asked the doctor.

Yes, no, well, no. No! I just want to understand..., said Alisha.
Alisha was long inwardly ready to embrace the adventure, and, well ... heavens. This wasn't exactly torture. But she needed some time to process it all.
Finally, the doctor asked: And one more thing – are you on the pill?
Yes, answered Alisha.
Can you show me the packet?, asked the doctor.
The handsome man handed Alisha her backpack, and she pulled out the pill packet.
The doctor glanced at it briefly and said: Stop taking it from today. You could continue, but it would be unfavorable. You won't get pregnant anyway; you'll learn the reasons later.
May I...?, asked Alisha.
No, you may not, not yet. Quite a demand, yes? – The doctor looked at Alisha kindly and grasped her shoulders. Not yet. And I promise you won't regret your advance trust. And now I wish you all the best for what's to come. ... Oh ... to reveal at least something, those (she tapped Alisha's breasts with a mischievous smile) ... those will grow. The doctor winked at Alisha.
Not that Alisha was dissatisfied with her breasts, but *a little more* had definitely been on her wish list. Was that really possible?
The doctor whispered to Alisha, already half-turning away: There are *ornamental breasts* and *functional breasts*. The *functional breasts* are the more interesting ones! The doctor signaled a hush, laughed loudly, and returned to the podium table[18].
Alisha..., called the second woman at the podium table.
Alisha turned back to the podium table.
Alisha, you now face a necessary little test, partly as a trial for yourself and us, and secondly because it can't be done otherwise. And thirdly, it gives you more time to think. You'll now begin a journey with this man, she nodded toward the handsome man at the door. You'll get an off-road vehicle, fuel, water, food, and set off. The man who received you earlier has enough information to find the way. Avoid contact with any people you might encounter by chance. The likelihood is low, but nomads or adventurers could stray into this area. And ensure you're not spotted by possible planes, and make no fires. Do you have a flashlight with you?, she asked.
Yes, said Alisha.
Don't use it in the open. The place you're going to must remain unknown to

18 The doctor alludes here to the fact that the dormant female breast is a deception of nature, which, evolutionarily, developed much later than the ability to lactate. The size of an active breast is determined by glandular tissue, while the dormant breast consists of fat tissue and serves purely as a signal. Such a deceptive lactation ability exists only in humans, not in any animal species.

anyone. Truly no one! Do you promise to make every effort?, she asked.
Of course, said Alisha, laughing now.
The handsome man interjected, Alisha, this is really important. Once you know what it's about, you'll understand; it would be a pity if what we're visiting were destroyed, and there are enough people who would destroy it. Will you just trust me?, he said.
Alright, said Alisha, I promise. I'll make every effort to keep this mysterious place you're talking about mysterious. But I'm bursting with curiosity, can you understand that?
Laughter.
We can, said the woman, and honestly, I'd love to tell you more, but you mustn't know until you've seen it yourself. No one may know who hasn't seen it. We're not allowed to say, but the prohibition makes sense. You know, it's entirely different whether you've experienced something yourself or only know it abstractly. So, enough discussion, you want to drive off today.

Those still seated now rose from their places and approached Alisha, who, naked as she was, was surrounded by six clothed people. They shook her hand, murmured that incredible things awaited her, gave mysterious looks – and then she was dismissed, left (naked) alone in the room with the incredibly handsome man.



Journey to the Promised Land

Come, said the handsome man, you can bathe in the fountain ahead, I think you could use it. Without further questions, he simply took Alisha's things, leaving her no choice but to follow him stark naked. When she caught up, he was already in the beautiful reception hall they had passed through earlier. He placed her things on a bench, stripped naked himself (yes!), and laughing, plunged into the fountain.
Come on, don't be shy, I'm not allowed to touch you anyway, he called. He swam on his back, and his enormously swollen pointer indicated that, as so often in life, rules and personal desire stood in contradiction.
Alisha huffed and let herself fall into the water too. How delightful it was! The fountain was perhaps chest-deep, and Alisha held her breath to dive completely under. She swam to the bottom and to the other end of the fountain. The floor was covered with a tasteful mosaic pattern, though the many air bubbles unfortunately obscured a full view. When Alisha surfaced again and shook out her wet hair, she decided it would be worth a trip in itself to bathe naked in an airport fountain. All that was missing were passengers and ground staff, preferably a crowd of oil

sheikhs and veiled women watching her. Alisha would have found that highly thrilling at the moment. But there was no one around, even the strange border official seemed to have vanished, and there was no trace of the five people from the examination room, though they had already seen her naked, so they didn't count. Alisha dove deep into the fountain again, admired the mosaic floor, made a few swimming strokes, and resurfaced.
And what comes next?, she asked.
We take the things, go to the car, and drive off. The off-road vehicle is ready outside, and the provisions are already in it. Are you ready?, he replied.
One moment, said Alisha, diving deep through the basin once more, and when she surfaced, she said, now. Now we can go. No, wait. Women are terribly curious, you must know. Why this examination? I mean, with all these oddities, I'm hardly surprised by anything anymore, and if I weren't already half in a dream, then ...
Alisha no longer knew how to continue her questions.
... but what's the point of it? Is this a girl abduction for some rich oil sheikh's harem? But why the huge effort and why this ordeal? And why the thing with the breasts?, she pressed.
Alisha looked helplessly at the man who had swum over to her. He blew a strand of hair from his eyes, washed there by the fountain's water. He gazed at Alisha for a while without a word, took a breath, didn't speak, took another breath, grasped the naked Alisha firmly by both shoulders with his strong hands, looked deep into her eyes (Alisha felt a rush), and finally said:
I really can't tell you anything, unfortunately, not yet. Only that you *won't* regret it. Really not. Just wait a few days, that's all.
Suddenly he grinned cheekily and openly looked at Alisha's breasts:
But one thing I can tell you. Your breasts will become more beautiful and fuller. About two cup sizes. Promised with a money-back guarantee.
Suddenly the man blushed and quickly added:
Not that they need it, they're already very beautiful now, but I just mean, because most women complain about their breasts.
So so, replied Alisha, so you think they're already beautiful now, but could become even more beautiful?
The man blushed deeper and squirmed. He let go of Alisha's shoulders.
I just mean, he stammered, you'll see.
That sounded like something to take seriously. Not that Alisha hadn't had this or that wish regarding her breasts. But what secret knowledge could this be? Wouldn't it have spread by now? In any case, Alisha was curious enough to let herself fall into the adventure. Peace, order, and safety she could have had at home, but that was clearly not her life's dream. Her life wasn't at stake, nor her health, and her freedom had already been taken at home. So the rest was a matter of definition, and whether one prostituted the mind to achieve something or the

body, one would have to seriously ask what was more moral. Alisha was for honesty, including with herself. Therefore, turning back was out of the question for her.

When they finally climbed out of the water, the man scratched his head. We don't have towels, he realized.
So what, said Alisha, if we're already bathing naked in an airport hall, it shouldn't be a problem to use the breeze as a towel. Or are there people here after all?
No, said the man, not a single one; this place is normally completely deserted. This used to be a French military base or something, but that was long ago. Let's just go to the car.
So, both naked, carrying their clothes in hand, they left the airport hall and went to the off-road vehicle. A jeep, Alisha would have called it, but to her, every off-road vehicle was a jeep. This one certainly looked like it, with a windshield in front and a roof above, but open all around. The man tossed the clothes and Alisha's backpack carelessly into the back of the vehicle and took his place in the driver's seat. Alisha sat beside him in the passenger seat. The man pulled a notebook from the glove compartment, opened it, and Alisha saw driving instructions—left, right, straight ahead, that sort of thing—along with further notes about the terrain, but no map.
The man reached for the dashboard to start the car, but Alisha said, wait a moment. He pulled his hand back and looked at her.
You ..., she asked shyly, ... they mentioned something about seven times a day in there, the massage. Was that meant seriously?
Yes, he answered simply, I will do it, I'm not as good as that master, but I'm not unskilled. And to not beat around the bush: Say "milking," because that's what it is.
Alisha looked at the man. He had said the word neither vulgarly, nor demeaningly, nor provocatively, not even particularly emphasized. The word "milking."
The man saw Alisha's confusion and smiled. Milking comes from milk. Name a better word, but it must be honest, no euphemism.
Alisha found none. But it sounds brutal, she said.
Isn't it strange that things are given a brutal sound that aren't brutal at all? – That's our coming adventure, let yourself into it, it's worth it!
Where were they going? What was planned for her? Was it, after all, something like an abduction to a desert palace? But too many people were involved for that. For such an effort, she would have had to be a beauty queen or something, and Alisha didn't consider herself that. Unless she was a "special order" for someone with particular tastes. Such things were supposed to exist! But what about her could prompt a lustful, bored desert sheikh to have her fetched from so far away?

No, all nonsense... Even female specialties could have been obtained much more easily. Alisha decided she wasn't a special order for a rich oil sheikh.
Meanwhile, the car started, and off they went. The breeze was extremely pleasant in the prevailing heat, and drying her bath-wet skin was the least of their problems. They quickly left the dilapidated little airport behind. There was no road. Only the arrangement of stones and old tire tracks showed they followed a track laid out for vehicles. Tracks crossed, diverged, and joined them. They drove the off-road vehicle toward a mountain range rising on the horizon. Always straight ahead. Both had dressed again by now, as the sun burned mercilessly, its rays finding their skin even from the sides. For drinking, the man had brought only pure water, but warm cola wouldn't have been the drink of the hour anyway, and with a bit of thirst, the water, if one thought about it, tasted quite excellent.
After about three hours, the first stop. Take off your shirt again, said the man. Alisha had already known what was coming when they slowed down. During the drive, she had calculated: once in the morning and once in the evening subtracted, that left five times in between. At about seven times a day, they should have stopped even earlier. Alisha took off her shirt and sat bare-breasted on her seat again. If she couldn't get to the incredibly handsome man any other way, then at least like this.
Get out and lean your head against the car. No, a bit more bent forward, he instructed. The man poured oil onto his palms, rubbed it in, stepped behind Alisha, and began massaging her breasts from there. Hmmmm, pleasant. And anyway, the touch of such a man... The man started the massage with both hands reaching under her armpits at the breast bases and worked slowly in large circles, narrowing toward the front. Alisha purred. Especially the areas at the sides back and front top were surprisingly interesting. He lingered long in the area of the areolas but meanly left the nipples themselves untouched, though they were right next door, half a centimeter more, and it would surely have been even more interesting. Though the current sensation had to be called worth experiencing too. The man made small circular movements with his index and middle fingers in the areola area, cautiously probing into the deeper breast tissue, feeling the structures in the breast, and gently massaging them through. When one spot was done, he placed the two fingers on another spot of the areolas and started anew. It wasn't as overtly sexual as with that master, but still a dream of pleasant touch. At some point, the man had unfortunately completed the inner circle around the nipples (sadly without them!). It had been far too short, Alisha found, at most two or three minutes. Now he placed his fingertips with the back of his hand toward her body on her breast base at the shoulder and slid his hands to her nipples. Alisha got goosebumps, and her nipples stood erect. He started a bit to the side and slid again toward the nipples. He touched the nipples! If only sideways from back to front. So he worked his way quickly around both breasts. Nipples and areolas

reacted by becoming craggy, firm volcanoes. A strange but wonderful feeling, but over even faster. But now came a third stage: the man reached under her swaying breasts from the sides and shook them in quick movements – also, as before, all around the breasts. But alas! After a short time, this pleasant enjoyment was over too. Alisha was about to be disappointed, as it had been at most five or six minutes, when the man's fingers finally grasped her nipples. With his thumb on one side and index and middle finger on the other side of the nipples, he began, starting from the areolas behind the nipples, to perform rolling, milking movements toward the nipples, massaging, wringing, pulling forward. And skillfully, but with no little force! Alisha was unsure for a few moments, as the sensation was quite intense. But since it didn't cross the critical threshold, Alisha relaxed again and let it happen. This too proved to be pleasurable. Alisha sighed contentedly. Keep going, don't stop, she thought. But this too ended, though after a somewhat longer time.
That's enough, decided the man, ten to twelve minutes are sufficient. Was it too strong?
Alisha shook her head. She was still somewhat absent.
Come, get in, you can dream in the car, we want to move on, he added. Alisha half-expected a concluding pat on the bottom, but it didn't come. When Alisha opened her eyes, the man wasn't grinning but looked at her with an open gaze.
What's your name, by the way?, asked Alisha.
Tim. Actually Thomas, but no one calls me that because it feels like every second person is named that. I got the nickname Tim after some crime novel hero, he replied.
How did you end up being my guide?, asked Alisha.
Strictly speaking, I'm not, answered Tim. In a way, of course, but much more I'm a kind of slave for you. Yes, really! I have a debt to pay off, that's the reason. But not forever. And don't think I do this reluctantly. Quite the opposite. What I will receive is worth it all and much more. I have to protect you, guide you, and be of use to you in every way that doesn't benefit me and doesn't endanger my mission.
Alisha squinted. To be honest ... I find you more than delicious. Suppose I order you to fuck me right now, would you have to do that too?, she asked.
No, said Tim, I couldn't, because that wouldn't work without me feeling pleasure, so I'd benefit from it. Besides, an orgasm might be unavoidable, and I'm bound to something like celibacy.
You're a monk?!, exclaimed Alisha.
No, said Tim, only for a certain time, and I can be involved in sexual things, but I must not gain satisfaction from it, at least during this time.
But suppose I ordered you to lick me or finger me, would you have to do that?, asked Alisha.
Yes, said Tim, I would have to. And he stared straight ahead through the

windshield of the remarkably fast-moving off-road vehicle.
Don't worry, said Alisha, I don't even want to, and put her shirt back on.
Three hours later, the pause repeated, the drive continued, and again they stopped solely to massage Alisha's breasts. No: to "milk" them. So the hours passed, the mountains drew closer, and by evening they had reached them. To Alisha's surprise, remnants of an old rusted fence were visible. They drove through and toward the mountains. Some completely dilapidated buildings came into view along their path. Alisha had hoped the mountains might offer shady palms or something similar, but all there was were rocks and rubble, not a single withered plant. Their vehicle picked its way through a valley between the mountains. The sun burned mercilessly even in the evening, and the colored rocks reflected its rays into their vehicle. Alisha felt as if they had been driving for a whole week when Tim, in the last rays of the sun, suddenly exclaimed that they had completed the first stage. He pointed ahead, where a far-overhanging rock was visible. There we sleep tonight, he said. He steered the off-road vehicle toward the overhanging rock, drove beneath it, and finally switched off the engine.
After getting out, Alisha could barely straighten her back; the short stops somehow didn't count for her back and legs. She shook her limbs and took some water to wash her face.
Don't use too much water, said Tim, we have enough with us, but you never know how things turn out.
Alisha decided to follow the advice. Tim tossed her a blanket. We sleep in the car, because of the scorpions. There aren't supposed to be many here, but why give up comfort you can easily have.
The car seats reclined, and with a mat placed over them, they formed a reasonably comfortable sleeping spot. The last breast massage Alisha received, for a change, lying on her back from the front. She had already closed her eyes, and since the massage was relaxing, she fell asleep during it. At night, she registered in half-sleep that Tim actually performed his duty on her breasts even at night. Not my trouble, she thought in half-sleep and was instantly dozing again.
The night remained warm, though Alisha had expected a sharp cooling. On the contrary, the prevailing 22 to 25 degrees were pleasant after the daytime heat, and Alisha slept well, except for the one interruption.
The next morning, Alisha was the first to wake, as a certain need pressed, and when she went around the rock to relieve herself, Tim followed and told the crouching Alisha not to do that, to stay in his line of sight. Or put differently: Always stay where you can see me. I don't know what awaits us, but I've already seen a lot of surprising things I didn't expect. So we better not risk anything just because you need to shit. I'll do the same. So go ahead, he said. And he actually stood where he was.
Say, can't you at least turn around? I can't like this!, said Alisha.

Yes, you can. If not now, then certainly later. And if not later, then just a bit later, he replied.
Indeed, that helped, without her having to wait for *even later*.
For breakfast, there was bread, sharply salted sausage, fruit, and plenty of water. It didn't taste bad to Alisha at all, as she was quite hungry, and the oddly colored rocks around them offered a charming contrast.
Say, asked Alisha, isn't this salty sausage a pretty stupid idea if we're supposed to save water?
No, mumbled Tim, chewing, first, nothing else keeps in this heat, second, it replenishes the salt you sweat out, and third, saving doesn't apply to drinking, especially not for you. Drink as much as you want and gladly a bit more. But the water is only for drinking, that's all.
When they finished eating, Alisha stretched against a rock, yawned, and with a cheeky glance: And, now I get milked again, yes?
Yes, you do, but laugh all you want, you'll be very grateful to me for it later, said Tim.
Why the hell, anyway?!, burst out Alisha. Does it really have to be that I, as a silly goose, sorry, silly cow, learn nothing at all?
Unfortunately, yes, said Tim, but you'll soon know everything, and then you'll have it better than me, if that consoles you.
Come on, said Alisha apologetically, do your duty, but couldn't we do it right here? The view here is nice, we're sitting in the shade...
I can sit behind you, said Tim, that works quite well, move forward a bit.
Alisha shifted forward, creating a gap between her back and the rock. Tim slid in between, sitting with legs spread behind her, but a hand's breadth of space remained between them.
Take off your shirt, he said.
Alisha took off her shirt and sat bare-breasted before him. His hands slid under her armpits as before and began massaging her breasts. Alisha purred contentedly, and since the opportunity was favorable, she leaned her back against his chest.
That should make it easier for you, said Alisha.
It should, he said.
Alisha giggled. Poor guy. His erection clearly contradicted his curt reply, pressing more than noticeably against her bottom. But the massage really worked well this way, perhaps aided by the physical closeness. Alisha felt his hands and fingers probed better into her breasts, kneading, massaging, wringing, moving in concentric circles from the back to the front, until finally her areolas and nipples were milked, left-right, left-right, left-right. First quick and nicely stimulating, then slower and deeper. How relaxing... Alisha's thoughts drifted away ... what would it be like, for example, to be held captive by a rich, handsome desert sheikh in an oasis as a milk slave, the finest piece in his collection, well cared for due to

her milk quality, kept in good spirits, and exempt from work... And handsome slaves would milk her. Perhaps slave women too. And she would offer her milk herself in a beautiful porcelain bowl, the most precious part of his diet, to grant him health and a long life, not to mention the exquisite pleasure of her precious milk's unique taste. And in the evenings and mornings, he would prefer to suck the milk fresh directly from her body.
Left-right, left-right, left-right.
A nudge on her shoulder: We're done, come on, let's go.

Desert valley followed desert valley. Drive followed pause for breast massage followed drive followed pause for breast massage. This was not without consequences. As pleasant as the pauses were for stretching her back and legs, the massages evidently had an effect on Alisha's breasts. They responded with a slight tightness, especially at the sides, and became sensitive to touch. Alisha told Tim this.
Can't we skip a bit until the breasts get used to it?, asked Alisha, genuinely concerned.
No, said Tim very firmly, this tightness is normal at the beginning and a good sign. It will even get stronger. Your breasts are growing now, you know?
They just grow like that? Nothing more is needed? Seeing and believing are two different things! It would have spread long ago if you could enlarge breasts so cheaply. Do you think I wouldn't have done it already if even a rumor of such a simple trick were around?, said Alisha.
But it's true, said Tim. Let me do it, and let yourself get into it.
And they stay large?, asked Alisha.
Yes and no, said Tim. Only if you do the massages regularly ... or something else – but you'll find that out soon enough.
Alisha barely heard the last part. So that was the catch. No one in normal life could do the massages so often. She said so aloud.
Chin up, laughed Tim. They'll stay with you, believe me.
And the drive continued.
And another day passed in this way.
And another day.
The drive had become monotonous, though the desert landscape was not without charm. At times, Alisha dozed off during the drive, as there was nothing better to do.
Suddenly, with the sun already near the horizon, Tim stopped the off-road vehicle, waking Alisha.
What's wrong?, she asked.
Tim looked in his notebook, then at the surroundings, and murmured that it was quite clear, they were there. But he drove on, intently studying the rock slopes to

their left. A few kilometers later, he suddenly shifted into a lower gear, and the off-road vehicle rumbled up a slope with a roaring engine until a cave became visible. He steered toward it, drove a few meters inside, and turned off the engine.
End of the line for the car, he said, the rest of the way we have to go on foot. Take your backpack out. I carry water and food, but if you have room in your backpack, take some more water ... you never know. But don't overload yourself, food, drink, path, and safety are my job.
Alisha packed some more water into her backpack. While rummaging, the pill packet fell into her hand again. It echoed in Alisha: "You won't get pregnant anyway, you'll learn the reasons later." Alisha crumpled the packet in her hand, intending to throw it into the cave.
No, don't do that, said Tim. The packet reveals its origin. – Tim took the packet from Alisha, placed it further back in the cave with crumpled paper on the ground, poured some petrol over it, and lit it. Alisha watched the sooty fire. What remained, Tim crushed with his foot and buried under sand.
When everything necessary was removed from the car, Tim pulled a sand-colored tarp from the off-road vehicle, covered it, and weighed down the tarp on the ground with rubble. Finally, he threw sand on the tarp's edges, and the vehicle was fairly well camouflaged in the cave's half-darkness.
By now, it was dark. They ate their meal by the light of a slightly battered candle in the cave, and afterward, Alisha received her obligatory breast massage. It seemed to Alisha that Tim pulled her breasts more than usual ... there was no other way to describe it. Suddenly, Tim paused, rummaged in his backpack, pulled out a flashlight, and shone it on Alisha's left breast. Look here, he said, and with thumb and index finger deep in the areola area, he made a skillful, slow, wringing, strong milking motion toward the nipple. Alisha saw a dirty-yellow, thick droplet emerge in the flashlight's beam.
I noticed it yesterday, said Tim, but the color wasn't perfect yet. It will become more, and the color will soon be white, properly white. At the moment, any absurd color is possible.
Is that real milk?, asked Alisha, astonished.
Almost, he said, it's a kind of precursor, but soon you'll have real milk, and then it will increase. The more, the easier it will be for you later.
What's the point of it all?, asked Alisha. I find it very exciting, it doesn't feel bad, and because you're doing it, it's more than just that, Alisha blushed, ... but what's the purpose behind it?
Tim hesitated. You know, you're not supposed to know until you're there ... but you'll need it there, your milk, I mean ... and ... I ... no, I won't say anything, but it's magnificent, hear me, you're a chosen one, and you'll never regret it. And I'll be a chosen one later too.
He had tears in his eyes, real tears. Alisha swallowed. It's alright, she whispered,

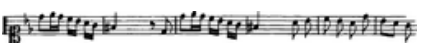
it’s alright. I trust you.
Chosen one...
Come, let’s go, said Tim hoarsely, we have to go in that direction. He pointed with his left hand toward the valley exit and slung his backpack onto his back with his right. Alisha, who had long lost any sense of where they were, put her shirt back on, shouldered her much smaller backpack, and followed him.

It was well into the night, and with no cloud in the sky, the starry heavens shone in full splendor, and the full moon glowed, making navigation easy. We’ll walk through the night except for pauses, said Tim, you wouldn’t withstand it under the blazing sun. It was good that you slept during the drive.
So they trekked through the desert night, hour after hour, with pauses in between, pleasantly extended by breast massages, and on again. When Alisha wanted to sit during unscheduled breaks, Tim immediately roused her: You get sluggish if you sit, better stand for a moment if you need rest, he said. On it went, hour after hour. As Alisha’s feet ached, she inwardly praised her breasts for securing regular pauses. Only as the morning sun approached did Tim seek a protruding rock promising shade for a sleeping spot. Here we sleep through the day, he said, helping Alisha remove her backpack. Alisha was dead tired, her legs ached, and for her thoroughly sweaty body, she wished for nothing more than the fountain bath they had taken before departing. It was good she wore her old, broken-in hiking shoes and not newly bought ones, which would surely have been hell here. Alisha ate during the breast massage, barely noticing Tim’s genuine excitement over the first white drops from her breasts. Tim seemed a perpetual motion machine, simply tireless, all the more astonishing as Alisha could sleep through while he had to interrupt his sleep to massage and milk her breasts. She woke only briefly, dozing off again instantly. Or she didn’t always wake – Alisha couldn’t say for sure. After eating, Alisha more fell to the side than lay down. There are scorpions here, she thought briefly, but was so tired it didn’t matter. When Tim ate dinner, Alisha was already asleep. She didn’t notice him covering her with the blanket.
So they slept through the day’s heat. Alisha woke in the late afternoon without Tim needing to rouse her. Her shirt was pulled up; Tim must have milked her, poor guy, and her breasts ached intensely.
Can you do something good for my breasts? – They’re unbearably tight, she said.
Tim sat behind her and began his work – left-right, left-right, left-right. Actually a mean trap: The milking made the breasts wild, which created the desire to be milked, which made the breasts wild, which created the desire to be milked. But it was pleasant. Pleasant and relaxing. And lustful. And the great attention her breasts received was a unique bonus. When Tim slowed his rhythm after three or four minutes, beginning to reach deeper into the breasts and wringing them

lengthwise, Alisha saw milk literally squirt from her breast. Only once, but still, and Alisha laughed aloud. Great!, she cried, that was at least a meter. And feels good, she added. She turned to Tim. May I kiss you?, she asked.
You may, but I can't return it, answered Tim quietly.
She hesitated a moment, but then slipped from his grasp, turned kneeling, and gave him a gentle kiss on the forehead. Just this once, promised!, she said, and sat back obediently in her original position, her back leaning against his chest.
She felt the rhythmic pull on her breasts grow stronger, and an erection began pressing against her bottom.
Afterward, she had a healthy appetite and ate the unexciting food with gusto.
As they sat comfortably against the rock under their rocky roof, looking around, Alisha noticed for the first time *really* how varied the desert mountains were, with their own beauty. Jagged rocks in bizarre shapes and different colors, and at their feet the finest golden-yellow sand. Staring long at the strange rocks, with a bit of imagination, one could picture them as people, animals, or buildings. Alisha was almost disappointed when the sun set, and Tim, after another milking of her breasts (again with milk squirts), urged departure. Alisha noticed Tim took even greater care than usual to leave nothing behind and erase all traces.
When starting, Alisha limped a bit, and Tim looked at her worriedly, but the limping eased after a few hundred meters. Apart from her legs still aching, they were probably just "rusted." Alisha had hiked a lot on past vacations and would survive this desert trek, she decided.
The night temperature was pleasant again, and stars and moon lit their way. But walking was harder than the previous night, and after milking pauses, Alisha had no desire to get up. Tim, however, held up surprisingly well, seemingly a trained runner. At times, he took Alisha's backpack, carrying it alongside his other gear. But Tim allowed no long pauses, reminding her not to sit during short breaks. Unfortunately, he wouldn't be persuaded for unscheduled milking pauses. And he began rationing water. Just to be safe, he said. So passed the second night trek, after which Alisha, utterly exhausted, fell instantly asleep, unaware of whether, when, how long, or how often she was milked.
When Alisha woke in the afternoon, again with exposed breasts, Tim was already awake. He stopped her from stepping out of the shade, pointing to the sky where a plane was visible far above. Wait a bit, he said.
Alisha, urgently needing to urinate, grew angry. Is such a small plane really that important?, she asked.
It is, answered Tim. Just dig a hollow in the sand here under the rock and pee there. Alisha gave up, squatted, and watched a puddle form beneath her, quickly vanishing into the sand. She deliberately took a position giving Tim a clear view of her cleft pussy. Not that she was aroused, she was far too exhausted, but she wanted to annoy Tim, who seemed in good condition and couldn't touch her.

Unfortunately, he deliberately looked away, robbing Alisha of satisfaction.
Instead, Alisha unbuttoned her shirt completely – just because of the heat, he might think. And she would leave it open, so in the bright moonlight, her swaying breasts would catch his eye repeatedly, with him powerless to do anything since he had to keep watch over her. Let him suffer, she thought, she was suffering too. But she felt a bit of pity for Tim, who couldn't touch her and was only there for her. Still, Alisha decided to keep the shirt open, as the slight breeze on her skin felt good. And anyway, it was unfair that only men could unbutton their shirts when they wanted.
Tim showed no reaction and milked her after breakfast as skillfully as before. There were more milk squirts, and Alisha found it a pity they soaked pointlessly into the sand.

Setting out was even harder, her soles ached, and she felt utterly drained already. Yet Tim pressed forward, repeatedly encouraging her to keep a brisk pace when it began to lag. Tomorrow morning we're there, he consoled her. When was tomorrow, after this night? Or the next?
Tomorrow is tomorrow, smiled Tim, and Alisha wondered again where he drew his strength. If you walk briskly tonight, there won't be another night trek, I checked my notebook again carefully. We even have some time reserves if we keep walking briskly, he said.
We could..., began Alisha.
No, we couldn't, laughed Tim, dawdling brings no gain and costs much more energy in the end. But take heart, it's time for your breasts again.
Let go, come on, lean comfortably against Tim, close your eyes, left-right, left-right, left-right. Tim teased her with a squirt in her face.
Damned jerk!, she exclaimed.
He laughed. He felt energy reserves, he said. Let's go!
And on it went, meter by meter, kilometer by kilometer, hour by hour. The usual pauses in between, plus short standing breaks to drink, and Alisha no longer cared that her bare breasts swayed freely in the pleasantly warm night air, just on, on...
And on it went, meter by meter, kilometer by kilometer, hour by hour. Suddenly, in one of the countless desert valleys, Tim grabbed her shoulder, at some arbitrary spot where Alisha could find nothing special. We're here, he whispered excitedly. Then he cleared his throat. We're here, he said again in a normal voice, but still quieter than usual. In a few hundred meters, the Zone begins.



The Zone

The Zone?
Yes, said Tim, we want to reach a certain point in the Zone, not far from here, maybe three or four kilometers. But we will need half a day for it, and this time we walk during the day. In the afternoon we set off. We need good visibility now. But first a rest break. We look for another rock overhang.
You haven't told me what the Zone is, said Alisha.
Tim hemmed, our goal is right in the middle, a tunnel ... and from there straight to paradise. In a few hours I tell you more about it.
When they had found a sufficiently large rock niche, Tim, to Alisha's surprise, pulled a lightweight tent from his backpack and set it up. Take off your shoes now and put your feet in the tent without touching the ground, he demanded. Alisha did so, while Tim held her by the arms. Now stretch out your hands, he said. He rinsed her outstretched hands with precious water and a cloth. Now into the tent and don't touch anything outside, he instructed. Then Tim performed the same procedure on himself.
What is here?, asked Alisha.
They messed around here, said Tim. To be exact, not here, but in the Zone, but we play it safe. We are close to the goal and won't need much water anymore.

The milking was more a duty this time, Alisha felt that Tim was excited. Nevertheless, she fell asleep relatively quickly after eating.
But Alisha woke up earlier this time. It was about two o'clock, and the sun was baking the area. We wait a bit, said Tim, the heat is unbearable even in the shade.
After the meal, which they took in the tent, Alisha could no longer hold back: So what is this Zone now?, she asked.
Tim looked deep into her eyes: First another milking before the last stretch!, he said.
Alisha took off her shirt and turned her back to Tim. Tim moved close, one leg to Alisha's left, one leg to her right, slid his hands in the usual way under her armpits to her breasts and began to massage the breasts.
And?, asked Alisha, what is the Zone?
You know, began Tim, drawing out his words, we are approaching the entrance to a very special world...
An underground world?!, asked Alisha.
...no, not really, that's hard to explain. It is a completely different world. It was called Atlantis, it was called Paradise, it was called Beyond, there are quite different names for it. It has been sung about, longed for, but still it was also hated, said Tim.
Ouch!, cried Alisha, only happy cows give good milk, and you pull my breasts to

meter length if you go on like that. But tell on quickly.
Sorry, said Tim. He milked again somewhat more focused.
I'm not spinning tales, continued Tim. You will see it in a few hours with your own eyes and experience it in your own body. And then you will believe every word of mine. But first to the Zone. Man is strange. Paradise is only praised as long as it remains unattainable. But when it becomes concretely tangible, it is demonized. Have you ever noticed? Fun is basically always allowed only in a strictly regulated frame, and even in a small frame, prudes begrudge other people everything they don't dare themselves. And power rests on being able to give or withhold things from other people. Do people still need you as a priest if everything is abundant, for everyone and free? No. The curtain in an Orthodox altar wall symbolizes the entrance to paradise, and no one but the priest may enter. Behind the temple curtain of the Jews, the Holy of Holies was also taboo for ordinary mortals. Similar in other religions. Throughout history, people have repeatedly tried to restrict or completely forbid access to paradise. But there (Tim gestured vaguely into the desert valley) an entrance still exists. (He milked on.)
Alisha's speech had failed her. She swallowed. This was no longer abstract, this was quite concrete and within reach. And she didn't take Tim for a crank. Besides, he had been sent by others. But above all, cranks and swindlers like to push the object of desire always a bit further away and avoid the concrete, tangible. But this was concrete and tangible. It was within reach. Could it really be that... Alisha felt goosebumps all over her body.
Your nipples aren't milkable that hard, said Tim, and Alisha laughed. Let up, teased Tim and looked meanly right at Alisha's nipples, which only intensified the effect.
Tell on, begged Alisha.
Tim continued: They tried to destroy the entrance, but what they don't know: It didn't work. Tim laughed happily. Alisha felt his breath on her neck. Didn't work, repeated Tim. However, the way there has now become dangerous. They messed with the fundamental forces of the universe, and that has consequences. There is a path to the entrance that you must know, but you must not miss it by a meter, everything else can cost you your life, because outside this path inexplicable powerful forces are at work. It cost people their lives to scout this path. And even directly on the path you have to be careful. If you do that, you get through safely. But for heaven's sake, do everything exactly as I tell you, yes?
Tim stopped in his hand movements. Do you promise me that?, he asked.
Alisha's hair stood on end with excitement. I promise it, she said. But why do we make this effort with hiding if they know the place anyway? And what is this paradise exactly?, she asked.
Tim's hands went on working Alisha's breasts. Number one, said Tim, no one must notice that someone is interested in this place, because then they could come

check. That leads to number two: They think the access is destroyed, and they should keep thinking that. Number three: It, this paradise, is ... not perfect. You can imagine it like this, that it would be little fun to eat cream cake every day and sing hallelujah with the angels to harp music nonstop, said Tim.
Alisha laughed. So like that joke where in hell they booze and fool around and one party after another happens?!, she said, turning her head halfway back to Tim.
Tim grinned. Yes, somehow like that, but much more. It appears a little different to everyone, according to their innermost wishes. Everyone simply experiences different things, also adventures and such, dangerous things and banal ones. They all experience together only what is common to all. Roughly speaking. And that includes certainly *everything*, what people openly or secretly like to do. Things happen from the box of your most secret embarrassing wishes, and for inexplicable reasons and without your own doing. There are no taboos, it is ... like in a dream. That's it above all, he said.
Alisha became serious: But then fucking surely belongs to it, and not too little, she said.
Yes, said Tim, that plays an important role there, also in everyday life. Think away the moral rules that rulers, priests, or even just neighbors have given us for our control, and you can roughly imagine what goes on.
Alisha swallowed. That would surely be something more than just fucking, she said.
Yes, said Tim. He paused milking briefly. Yes, he repeated. (Now he milked excellently. Interesting, thought Alisha to herself.)
But what about you, asked Alisha aloud, why aren't you allowed? Or are you allowed there?
No, said Tim. I sneaked in without permission, so not like you, who are officially chosen. I spied for the Stasi, you know...
What?!?!, exclaimed Alisha.
Yes, don't look like that. I am actually a Stasi officer. Actually. Theoretically. Strictly speaking. Until I ... well ... oh, that's hard to explain, he said.
He stopped milking.
Alisha cleared her throat.
He went on.
I start the other way around, continued Tim, there are more accesses. Not countless, but there are others. One of these accesses was found in the GDR, and now the Stasi wants to know what's going on. But all strictly secret. Around the access they set up a restricted area, and no one is supposed to be let to ... the paradise ... ever. Also in the future not, as far as I know. Not even we Stasi officers were allowed. Only a few specially selected people were sent, whom the Stasi suspiciously monitored afterward. Well, and I had ... entered the paradise ... despite all prohibitions. I was completely overwhelmed by the beauty of the

world I found there and went back secretly again and again. After some time I defected. That's how it is with me. If you tell that at home, you deliver me to the Stasi's knife, he said.
For heaven's sake, whispered Alisha, I don't do that.
Tim went on speaking: They don't want ... in paradise ... unwanted intruders. That you have been chosen is a very special thing. But they gave me a chance anyway. I therefore serve three full years as a bailiff, and that includes that I must remain abstinent. But if I manage that, I will become a chosen one myself with all rights, he said.
His eyes shone.
And I make it!, he declared.
Alisha watched the milk, which squirted in fine streams between his fingers from her breasts and dripped, and squinted her eyes. And if you don't make it?, she asked.
Tim stopped milking again. It is damn hard, above all because it itches between the loins as soon as you are there. That can be unbearable, especially when others are fooling around and you have to watch. And I must not even touch myself, he said.
Ouch! - More careful! - And if you do?, asked Alisha.
Depends, said Tim (milking rhythmically again). You don't get thrown out, and no one has gone entirely voluntarily yet, but your time gets extended. Depending on. Masturbation cost me one month once, although it almost came by itself, I really only had to help a tiny bit, he said.
And *if* it comes by itself?, asked Alisha.
I don't know. Probably also a month, he said.
Mean!, said Alisha.
Come on, otherwise everyone would try it..., said Tim.
True again, said Alisha. But how are they supposed to notice that?, she asked.
They notice it, no idea how. But they notice it, said Tim.
Silently both watched in the next minutes how the milk still squirted a few times from Alisha's breasts, welled up in single drops, and finally ebbed. All in all, it was perhaps not even so much milk, but the squirting looked impressive.
When they were done, Alisha pressed further: How do you deal with being with the Stasi?, she asked.
Not at all, said Tim.
How?, asked Alisha.
I was born into it. Through my parents. But I'm basically not cut out to be an order-taker, and that brought me trouble from the start. Now, for example, I'm a lieutenant, but I once had a higher rank. You don't just get out of the Stasi, at least not without really serious trouble. The rest I tell you later. But please see me as a human, not as a representative of this outfit. Can you do that?, he asked.

Alisha looked at Tim: Hormonally considered, I can't help it anyway, it's just a blemish you have, she said. Otherwise, I take you for a good guy, and that's more important. If you could get out of the Stasi without too much trouble, would you?, she asked.
Immediately, said Tim.
That's enough for me, sighed Alisha. And otherwise, I would probably make sure they kick you out myself.
Tim smiled to Alisha's surprise. Not a bad idea, that would work, he said.
How?, asked Alisha.
Whoever wants to marry or even just has a steady relationship has to report it. If the woman seems dubious or has Western contacts..., said Tim.
Western contacts I could dig up if necessary, said Alisha.
Really? ...then you get a cadre talk anyway. They talk around the hot porridge for a while, but in the end, you're put before the question, Stasi or woman, and if you say in this case that you love the woman very much, then you get out of the Stasi without a black eye. Security risk, one must have understanding. And it's the Stasi that apologizes. Even with gays who have contact with the gay scene. That's the only clean way out, as far as I know. I saw that once and had it told to me firsthand, he said.
If you really want that, said Alisha, I will help you with it. That's a firm promise. Do you hear?
Thanks, said Tim. Now he smiled again. But now we have something else ahead of us. Something beautiful with a temporarily uncomfortable path. From here. Shall we rather focus on that now? It's worth it!, he said.
Yes!, said Alisha. I won't pester you further now. Tell me what I should do.
Listen, you tie your backpack tightly to your back later. You get a cloth from me that you wrap around your head. Tuck all your hair under it and let none stick out. You button your shirt. And see that nothing flaps around. When we are in the Zone, you touch nothing more, nothing at all! Imagine that everything lying around there is poison. And try to kick up as little dust as possible while walking.
Speaking of dust, said Tim.
Tim rummaged in his backpack and pulled out a large thick plastic bag.
Here you put your passport, your money, and what you consider halfway important or irreplaceable. What's not in there flies away afterward. You get something better for it later, he said.
Alisha began to fill the plastic bag.
Tim continued: Stay close behind me and walk as exactly as possible in my tracks. If I crouch, you crouch too, don't flail with your arms, and touch nothing, nothing, nothing. Do you hear? Here everything is dangerous, and things happen here that you've never heard of. And don't eat anything and don't drink anything. Are you still hungry or thirsty? Drink now, but if you have to pee later, that could

be awkward and costs valuable time, he said.
Alisha drank anyway. Already the announcement that she wasn't allowed to drink had made her thirsty. And if I just take off the panties under the skirt?, she asked.
Don't do it, said Tim, it protects against dust. He pulled gloves, the announced headcloth, and thick-walled plastic bags from his backpack. Tie the headcloth around now, the bags go over your feet, and you put on these gloves here, he said.

While Alisha, fully "dressed" with an emptied bladder, waited in front of the tent and drank another sip of water, Tim carefully sealed Alisha's plastic bag and put it in Alisha's backpack. Then he took everything down, erased their traces as always, and put on cloth, gloves, and plastic bags himself. Then he took his notebook in his left hand, and finally they set off.
This time Alisha was nervous. What might these dangers be that lurked for her in the Zone? After all, they had assured her that nothing could happen to her.
After a scant half kilometer, Tim stopped and looked in his notebook, at the ground, and then back in the notebook.
Here the Zone begins, he said hoarsely.
Whether the sweat on his forehead came from the searing sun or from his excitement was not discernible. Look here, he added and pointed to the ground in front of them. Something like a fine crack ran across the ground in front of them, nothing more. But the fine crack also ran up both slopes of the desert valley, as far as one could see. And the strangest thing: It was not covered at any single point by sand, rubble, or anything else.
Beyond it not even scorpions live anymore, commented Tim, but we won't stay in the Zone unnecessarily long either, don't worry.
Tim looked ahead after another glance in the notebook. Now this ditch here along below, always right at the bottom to that rock there, he said, pointing ahead. And don't forget, stay close behind me and don't deviate a millimeter from the path. If something's up, say so, he added.
They set off and climbed into the ditch. The sun burned mercilessly, and Alisha already felt like she was drying out completely. Rubble jumped aside under her feet, it was uncomfortable to walk, but she stayed strictly behind Tim until they arrived at the rock.
Another look in the notebook. Now to there, said Tim and pointed to something indistinctly elongated diagonally right far ahead of them in the desert valley. They climbed out of the ditch and then up a slight hill. This time it went a little better because the ground was halfway even. All of a sudden it became oppressively silent, almost painfully silent. Except for the clatter of the rolling stones and their breathing, nothing was to be heard, nothing at all. And their own noises caused no echo at all. One walked as if in a soundproof room. That stopped just as suddenly at the top of the little hill, and Alisha swallowed several times, like in an elevator

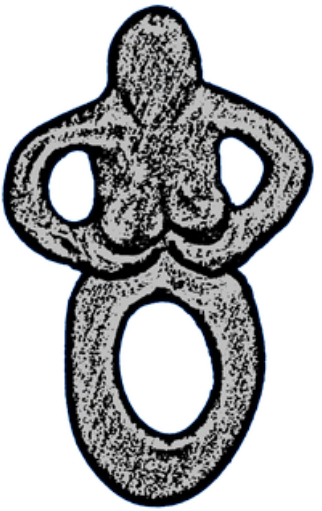
that quickly climbs a high-rise. But now the colors of the rocks seemed suddenly faded and offered the viewer nothing but gray tones. Only Alisha and Tim seemed to have color patches on them, but even these colors appeared weak. That too stopped just as suddenly several meters later, and the rocks showed their color layers again. They walked on. Maybe fifty meters before the next stage goal, Alisha stood rooted to the spot.
What is that, for heaven's sake?!, cried Alisha and was really afraid.
The object they were walking toward was an ordinary metal rod, maybe two meters long, somewhat bent and rusted. That was not the problem, but the metal rod hung in the air, right in the middle of the air, and without any recognizable hold.
Tim laughed. Surprise succeeded? It's harmless, but don't touch it anyway. Watch, he said.
Tim opened his backpack and took out a rusted piece of steel wire, maybe ten centimeters long. With it, he went to the rod and tapped the rod. The rod now turned slightly swaying in a circle.
That doesn't work, that's cheating, right?, asked Alisha.
No cheating, said Tim. You can't get this rod out of its position either. No matter how much force you apply, it snaps back into its old position like held by a rubber band. Crazy, isn't it? But there are quite other things here that are not at all harmless and that we hopefully don't get to see or feel. And from exactly now on especially, he said.
And you dragged this piece of rusted wire along to show me that?, asked Alisha.
Tim laughed. Yes and no. The little demonstration warns you that there are things here that go beyond our understanding, but I need it too. Watch, he said.
He looked again in his notebook, then searched the surroundings with his eyes, and then threw the piece of wire in front of him, but not high up, but in a chest-high movement that looked quite clumsy.
To there the path is clear, stay close behind me!, he said.
Alisha followed.
Arrived at the wire piece, Tim reached into the backpack again, this time took out a rusted screw, and threw it again flat about chest-high.
You're not even allowed to take the own wire piece?, asked Alisha.
No! We leave it lying. That's why it's also an object that someone might have thrown away ages ago, said Tim.
They moved to the fallen screw. So it went jump by jump with always different rusted metal parts, until Tim suddenly shouted STOP. Alisha froze instantly to a pillar of salt.
Do you see that shimmering there in the air?, he asked, pointing ahead and then diagonally right and diagonally left.
Alisha knew immediately what Tim meant. It looked like hot rising air, but

strangely began only about two meters above the ground with a sharply outlined boundary and shimmered in place, maybe twenty meters wide and twice as long, the upper boundary was not recognizable. But the shimmering didn't rise upward, as hot air normally does.
Watch, said Tim, and threw a rusty iron angle right into the shimmering air. What happened was unbelievable. The iron angle flew normally, but as soon as it reached the shimmering air, it was shot vertically into the ground with a deafening bang. No piece of metal protruded from the ground anymore. Nothing more. Only a slit hole was visible in the ground.
What is that?, whispered Alisha excitedly.
We must not get into that, answered Tim, but we have to go through underneath. In duck walk, and remember: Touch nothing, the hands stay up. Best rest them on your thighs. If even a tip of your hair gets in there, it shoots through you like a bullet, and that's it.
Tim read his notes very attentively again. Then they approached the shimmering cloud cautiously.
There is our goal, said Tim and pointed to a spot, only about fifty meters ahead of them. Use your strength sparingly, fifty meters duck walk with death right above you are not little.
Does it really have to be duck walk, isn't crouching enough?, asked Alisha.
The boundaries are not necessarily straight ... mostly yes, but not always. The safety distance must be, really, he said. Already crouching, he threw a larger iron nut flat under the shimmering cloud. The iron nut arrived intact.
Let's go now, he said. He waddled ahead, and Alisha followed. More than once both looked up fearfully. Down here the boundaries of the shimmering cloud were indeed visible sideways, but not at all when looking up. Meter by meter they pushed forward, and Tim threw iron parts in front of him again and again. Alisha's sweat ran burning into her eyes, and she panted. Another meter, another meter.
Don't get slower, urged Tim, these clouds can change their shape, and if it lowers, I don't want us under it. Alisha's eyes filled with tears; it was so unexpectedly exhausting, and she was completely tense with fear, her calves hurt, her hips, her neck, but the end of the cloud came closer. Another meter, another meter, another one. The end!
STAY DOWN!!!, roared Tim.
Alisha flinched, almost she had gone up too early.
Come, come, come, lured Tim, two meters more, you can do it!
Now he had her, prevented her from sitting on the ground, and held her with both hands. Alisha threw herself sobbing at him. Sorry, sorry ... I didn't think of it anymore, she said.
I should have thought of it, said Tim, that's exactly my job. But we made it, that's

important. Still, we must not take a break. Onward! And don't wipe the tears, he said.
He pulled her maybe twenty meters away from the shimmering cloud and looked again in his notebook.
That way!, he said.
On it went. Tim threw his rusted iron pieces again, until they came to a kind of small depression in the valley, a valley within the valley, but running across and blocking their way. Alisha looked down and saw that people had been active here: Bent steel beams lay around, she saw two shattered rusted trucks, concrete pieces, and other relics of this kind. And a kind of concrete tunnel entrance was there to the right below, also destroyed. We have to go around the depression, said Tim, unpredictable. Over there in that pit (he pointed to a hole left below) for example, a corrosive gas collects. Put your foot in, and it's gone. That tipped-over excavator back there (he pointed even further left below) is on the other hand a radiation source. Approach that thing to less than ten meters, and you get nauseous, leaden fatigue overcomes you, and three days later you are dead. The strangest thing is that the radiation of this excavator doesn't reach further than ten meters. And we can't go along the left slope up there either, he said, pointing to the left valley slope. Watch!, he said. He threw one of his iron pieces up the slope. Mid-flight, the flying iron piece suddenly glowed bright blue like a lightning bolt and dissolved in a trail of smoke.
Vaporized, commented Tim. But to the right we can go, he said. He looked once more in his notebook and threw another iron piece. On it went, throw by throw.
When they had successfully passed the depression, Tim looked again in his notebook. Alisha suddenly let out an astonished exclamation.
What is it?, asked Tim and looked up from his notebook.
Are we going there?, asked Alisha and pointed ahead.
In the heat of the valley, a gorge with lush green vegetation had become visible, trembling, a sea of blossoms on the rocks and a small stream in the valley floor.
Tim smiled. Yes and no, he said. That is indeed our goal, but what you see is unfortunately only a kind of mirage.
And there the lush green valley with the sea of blossoms and the stream disappeared again. Alisha saw only the dry hot desert valley.
Why was that only a *kind of mirage* and not a real one?, asked Alisha.
The physical background is a different one, answered Tim. That just now was not a real mirage, but one of the strange phenomena of this Zone here. Don't let yourself be distracted. Come! - This way!, said Tim, pointing forward with his arm and adding: Remember, touch nothing. And don't be surprised.
Tim went ahead.
Alisha followed.
Then Alisha saw how suddenly the ground gave way under Tim, and screamed in

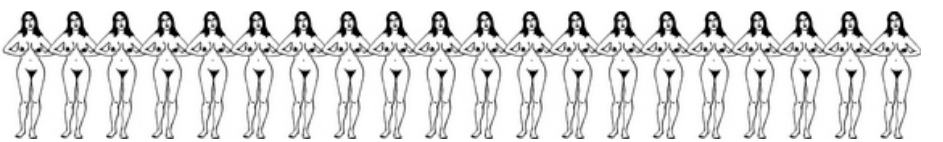
fright. But her scream sounded strangely quiet, as if something had clogged her ear canals. Alisha saw that the ground under Tim was springy, as if it were rubber. Just like a trampoline. But it was rock ground. Spellbound, Alisha stood still. Tim turned around, shouted something that Alisha couldn't hear, and waved for her to follow. Hesitantly, Alisha took a step and another. There was the spot. The ground suddenly became yielding. She felt ahead with her foot. Tim waved again to give her courage. The air screamed silently at Alisha now. Yet there was dead silence. Alisha took a step forward. Suddenly the silent tone changed, as if Alisha had passed through an invisible wall. Now it was a slowly oscillating very deep tone. But it was only perceptible, not audible. Almost it was a strong vibration. But the vibration acted only externally. Not inside the body. Alisha's hair stood on end, she got goosebumps, her nipples stood up. Above all that. Strange. Now something pulled with great force steadily at her nipples.
Tim gesticulated.
Oh. Alisha had been unfocused. She took the next step. The ground sprang softly under her feet. But she didn't sink in. She could walk without problems. The ground bounced under her. Alisha felt like hopping, like on a trampoline. But now something fumbled at her labia and her clitoris. As if someone were sucking on her below with giant soft lips. Did that have to be right now?
Tim gesticulated.
Oh. Unfocused again. My goodness! Alisha had no desire for arousal now, but that down there forced itself on. Was that intense!
Sucking-smacking-vibrating. Powerfully!
Alisha crossed the wobbling and springy ground resolutely. Arrived at Tim, he took her by the hand and pulled her forward with force.
After about fifty meters, the springiness of the ground abruptly lessened. Then the air screamed silently at Alisha again, became quieter with each step, quieter still, and finally Alisha heard Tim, who still held her by the hand, calling from far away: Ten meters more!
They ran ten meters more.
Made it, said Tim, now again in quite normal volume.
What was that?, asked Alisha.
Harmless. But sorry, I should have warned you anyway. How was it for you?, he asked.
Alisha blushed.
Tim laughed: Not here! Wrong time, wrong place. For men, by the way, it's less pleasant, my testicles hurt anyway, he said.
They went ten meters further.
We are almost there, said Tim. In the depression behind us, they drilled a tunnel into the mountain. We can't get into the tunnel, but somewhere up right in the mountain is a crevice through which you can get into the mountain; you have to

climb up the mountain a bit. But the spot is hard to find, and we must not stay here long either, he said.
Tim pulled a strange old-fashioned looking compass from his pocket. Alisha looked at the compass curiously. Where north was, Alisha couldn't have said, but this compass clearly didn't point to north. Also, its scale was completely different, because only a semicircle was marked with scale lines, and the labeling consisted of symbols whose meaning Alisha couldn't grasp. The needle pointed toward the mountain. Now Tim turned the compass so that it stood vertically. The needle pointed diagonally upward.
Up there we have to go, said Tim and pointed to a spot up on the mountainside. Stay close to me and don't touch anything while climbing up, he said.
They climbed up the mountain. Yellow rubble, yellow sand. No plant. Blazing heat. Alisha's sweat ran in streams down her body. At least it didn't go steeply up, but Tim chose a kind of zigzag path that rose less steeply. Tim kept checking with his strange compass, first horizontally, then vertically. On it went. It was easy to see that Tim avoided shortcuts in favor of a safe ascent. Alisha really didn't have to brace herself on any of the stones even once.
Then Tim pointed to a rock crevice. He suddenly seemed pale to Alisha.
The crack was created by the explosion in the tunnel below, come, said Tim, we must not stand still here. Alisha noticed from Tim's voice that he was afraid and reacted immediately. Quick, keep going, said Tim, and don't touch anything. But don't fall.
The climb became surprisingly easy from here, because the stones lay conveniently and were quite comfortably usable as a substitute for stairs.
Arrived at the crevice, Tim took his flashlight from the backpack and switched it on. Go only a little way in first, until you get used to the darkness, said Tim, and remember, don't touch anything!
The passage led straight into the mountain, small rubble and sand smoothed the ground somewhat, but overly fast movements were not possible, especially since they weren't allowed to touch anything. As Alisha got a little used to the darkness in the rock crevice, she noticed that the walls partly looked melted, there were spots where liquid rock must have dripped down. They set off, into the mountain in the light of the flashlight. After maybe two or three hundred meters deep inside the mountain, a large gap suddenly opened on the right, which Tim pointed to. There we have to go in, he said. About ten meters beyond the gap, Alisha saw something astonishing - it was the remains of a natural cave, on whose walls Alisha discovered drawings in the half-darkness of the flashlight's light, which might be thousands of years old. Among depictions of people in various activities, a life-sized depiction of a woman stood out above all, holding her breasts out to the viewer with both hands, while her legs were only hinted at and formed into an "O," which one could interpret as an opened vulva.



Remember, whispered Tim, touch nothing. But isn't it a crime that someone wanted to destroy something like this?
Yet he didn't linger. He pulled a sheet from his backpack and spread it on the ground in front of the wall drawing of the woman.
We are now right at the goal, and there we are absolutely safe, he said, but listen closely so we can get out of here quickly: through the woman holding her breasts with her hands, you can walk, don't ask long now, it really works, imagine it's just paper. You take off your shoes now and step *directly* from the shoes *directly* onto this sheet here, facing the drawing, but don't walk on the bare ground. You drop all your things and strip completely naked. Absolutely everything, gloves last. Let the things fall behind you without them touching you again. Then you walk into the wall. You take nothing with you, nothing at all, who knows what's on the clothes by now.
And my passport?!, escaped Alisha, it's still in my backpack, and the things are well-packed. And my money too, and other important stuff.
I take care of it, assured Tim, come, hurry up.
Alisha let her backpack slide to the ground. And you come after?, she asked.
I follow you a bit later, answered Tim, only when you've arrived in there. It's important that we go separately. You just keep walking straight ahead, no matter what you see or hear. When you're through, you find a washing place. There you wash quickly but thoroughly, and pay special attention to hair and body cavities, also ears, eyes, nose, mouth, armpits, vagina, and bottom. Pull water through your nose once and spit it out, and let water run into your ears. Then move on quickly until you come to a kind of table. There you lie down and wait for what happens.

But wash first! And hurry, he said, his voice now sounding strained, we have to get away from here fast.
Alisha hesitated no longer and didn't think anymore. She loosened her shoes and stepped from them directly onto the sheet spread out at the feet of the woman on the ground.
Tim encouraged her: It's quite simple. And don't get scared that the rock feels really hard at the very first moment. That's just an illusion. You just have to keep walking decisively, otherwise there's nothing else to note. Come on - now!, he urged.
Alisha hastily tore off her shirt, let her skirt slide to the ground, and got rid of her panties. Then, now completely naked, she took a step toward the rock drawing. She held her breath. What she had to do now was eerie to her. But then she pulled herself together and took a resolute step directly into the rock. For a fraction of a moment, the rock felt as hard as expected, but as she pressed on decisively, it suddenly gave way and felt strangely crackling-electric and at the same time like a heavy liquid. Alisha slipped into the rock, the rock closed behind her, and no trace remained of what had just happened. Alisha was now safe.



Peridëis

What happened to Alisha when she stepped into the rock—or rather, the drawing of the woman—was described at the very beginning of this story. Also, how she passed through the strange cathedral-like structure to reach Peridëis and lay on the meadow, at whose feet a wonderfully lush green and colorful landscape unfolded in the valley. But what followed was missing. Not entirely—while Alisha dozed in the grass, contemplating a certain relaxation exercise with her fingers, Tim reappeared, the one who had guided her through the desert, now seeming so far away.

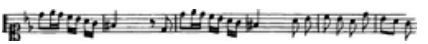
Arrived

Ahem, a man's voice cleared his throat at her head. Welcome to paradise ... no joke, really. It's called Peridëis, but the rest is true.
Alisha flinched, then laughed: Where've you been? I've been here at least half an hour. Paradise, you said? Seriously *paradise*? I thought it was a metaphor, a figure of speech. But literally ... isn't that a bit of a stretch?
She glanced upward, where Tim stood.
Naked man with an erection, viewed from below, she thought. Interesting angle.
Tim, behind her, let out a warm, ringing laugh: No, the paradise part is true. And now I can tell you everything. Everything.
Tim flopped onto the grass beside Alisha, unfortunately on his stomach.
He continued: Let's go step by step. We could've come here together, but I had to cover our tracks and get you out fast. Plus, it's tradition to come alone the first time ... it's different ... more intense ... more self-focused. So ... (he stammered, and Alisha furrowed her brow) ... well, miracles happen here. And those miracles are tied to you when no one else is around. They're your miracles, your deepest desires shaping the world. Sort of.
Tim visibly squirmed. Then, with a quick turn, he shifted to his side, propped his head on his hand, and looked Alisha in the eyes. More fluently, he went on: After what you just went through, you must see there's more to the world than what you can see or hear—things the mind can't instantly grasp. Right?
That was weird, Alisha admitted, walking through the rock, floating away, and especially the cathedral.
Cathedral?
The cathedral you walk through, Alisha added, puzzled. Why ask? You came through it too...

No, I came through a small room with ornate carvings, a sandalwood washbasin at the entrance, and a carved table behind it. There are small doorways in front and on the sides, leading to another room, but it's empty. And it loops back to the table and basin, always circling, a closed system. Strange, huh? — Everyone experiences the transition room differently, yet it's the same room. That's what Peridëis is about.
Why the different pronunciation, not paradise but Peridëis?, Alisha asked.
"Peri" means "fairy," and -deis comes from "land" or "realm." So, basically "Land of the Fairies." Someone mangled it into paradise, but that's not the only nonsense in those paradise stories. Eve, for example, tempted Adam with very different fruits...
...Fairies!, Alisha gasped, cutting him off. That story! She sat up. Glancing at Tim: By the way, you've got a hard-on. — Are the fairies beautiful?
Very beautiful, Tim replied, as if it were perfectly normal to be casually called out on an erection by a woman—naked, let's not forget—sitting beside him on a grassy slope. But, he added, Peris aren't my type. High-aesthetic, delicate eroticism, flawless to the detail, no imperfections, but not sensual at all. They radiate power, make you feel it, brook no dissent, perfect by definition, and treat you like air unless they want something. They're kinder to women, but distant with men, even when ordering you to please them. Though they're fair, they're not nice, and their fairness is probably calculated—they might need you someday. No, my erection's not for the Peris. Peridëis does this, and you smell very much like a woman right now. (Alisha noticed her slit was soaking wet.) You know what, Tim continued, there's a waterfall over there, perfect for swimming. Up for it?
And he was off. Alisha ran after him, laughing.
The waterfall plunged into a stone basin, about five meters wide and twenty long. Tim dove in headfirst, and Alisha followed. The water was pleasantly warm, not icy like some mountain streams. The basin was deep, unstandable except at the edges. Alisha savored the swim—no time for enjoyment in the cave. They dove and splashed silently for a long time, finally crawling ashore, exhausted.
Dreamy!, Alisha said, lying on her stomach in the grass, facing Tim, letting the sun dry her skin. This is really paradise, not just a mirage?
It is, Tim replied. Pe-ri-de-is, Peridëis. Ready for a lecture?
No.
What? Don't you want to know about Peridëis?
Yes. But ... honestly ... I'm buzzed. (Alisha giggled.)
Confused, Tim asked: What do you mean? What's that?
Oh, slang, forget it. I'm aroused. Sexually. Really intensely. More than ever before. It's overwhelming, controlling me. No brain left, get it?
Sorry. I thought you'd already dealt with it. That's normal here. Especially intense right after entering Peridëis. You don't need to hold back here. Never,

anywhere in Peridëis. It's common for people to just take a quick hand-break when the urge hits and no one's around to help. Just do it!
You're not serious?, Alisha asked, more unsure than outraged.
I am. Why torture yourself? The urge is way stronger here than in the other world—it's a core trait of Peridëis, and you can't escape it. People here just give in. Period.
And you?
I want to, I would, but I can't. You know why.
It's embarrassing. I'd be mortified knowing you know I'm getting off behind a bush, let alone doing it right here.
Her pussy told her otherwise, insisting it didn't matter and might even be thrilling with Tim watching. Her clit had long left its hiding spot, boldly demanding attention.
Tim seemed to sense it. He said: I can't myself, but I can help you. If you want.
Tim rose from the grass, studying Alisha's face. Seeing no resistance, he knelt at her feet and, with a firm tug, spread her legs.
Embarrassment and thrill. Both.
Soaking wet, Tim commented. Lips don't lie. Come here, you little hypocrite, I'm probably allowed this under the circumstances. He grabbed Alisha, pulling her into his lap so they sat in the grass, her back against his chest, her butt pressed against his hard cock, his feet spreading hers. His left hand began massaging her left breast, making milking motions, but his right hand ventured to her crotch. Alisha, long craving this, welcomed it, spreading her thighs as wide as possible. His right hand grazed her drenched vulva, seeking the spot where her lips met, where a tiny point hid, sometimes troubling its owner, now brazenly protruding. Tim scooped wetness from her eager hole, which yearned for more than a fleeting finger. He vibrated near the hot spot with the slickness, making Alisha see angels. The guy had experience—he knew exactly how to please a woman. Not directly, no, always circling the point, never neglecting her breasts, pulling them long until milk sprayed, the wetness amplifying the milking's pleasure. His right-hand finger vibrated tirelessly, dipping occasionally into her hole for more nectar, stretching it with other fingers to keep it appeased, returning to the point. Alisha felt it building slowly. She feared he'd stop, but he didn't. She feared he'd change something, but he kept on, unwavering. Then, with a deep, long pull on her left breast, never pausing his right hand, he gripped deep, pulled, sprayed milk far (the right hand vibrated fast), shook her breast while holding the nipple, twisted it ... and Alisha felt a massive orgasm approaching.
Please, please, she begged, keep going, keep going, more, harder, don't change, don't change, keep going, please don't stop, more, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yeeeeeeeeees...
A colossal orgasm shook Alisha, pulsing wave after wave, surging again, while

Tim's movements softened, slowing until his right hand gently, rhythmically reminded her point of its existence, and his left hand eased a bit more milk from her breast, spreading it like cream across her skin.
Alisha slowly surfaced. That was beautiful..., she whispered, her crotch twitching one last time. Waves ebbed and flowed, clouds drifted by, and she felt a warm trickle down her inner thigh, finding a path between thigh and buttock. What was that? — She opened her eyes, amused to find her navel filled with milk, more smeared across her belly. Then, with a jolt: And you?! She felt a rock-hard penis pressing against her buttocks.
Me? I don't count, Tim said. I serve without expecting reward, for then I get the greatest joy instead of small ones. Hear me? I'd never have been chosen to come here, but now I'm allowed if I endure this tiny three-year span, and much of it's already passed. And another thing, I enjoy this in a strange way. But you can do something—it's your only task. If you say no, I'd have to leave you. Are you clear-headed enough to listen?
Halfway, Alisha replied.



Tim Tells

Soooo, Tim drawled. Peridëis. Paradise. Land of the Peris, land of the fairies. I could talk for hours—there's so much to tell. I'll start with the essentials. What you just experienced was a transition to another world, *really* another world. Time moves slower here, you've got a new body, you can't die, get hurt, or fall ill, and you'll never face anything unbearable. There's magic, breathtaking nature, food everywhere, and people here focus on art, adventure, and creativity, not tech or hard work. No tech exists—no electricity, no phones—and travel is mostly by magic or on foot. You can have tons of fun, live adventures, and set no limits. No limits because you can't harm anyone, and no harm comes to you, no matter what. Speaking of: if you mess around with guys, you won't get pregnant or sick, so no boundaries there either. That brings me to the one obligation for women here, one you can't escape: you're probably already feeling your breasts tighten. (She was.) They'll get fuller, and you'll produce milk. A lot. That's because men in Peridëis can't survive alone. They need breastmilk every few days, or they suffer growing pain and turn into satyrs—mindless creatures driven by instinct. I rely on your milk too, or I'd have to leave Peridëis immediately. Can you imagine giving me your milk? Regularly? Daily?
Yes..., Alisha said, still dazed by the flood of news. She hadn't fully grasped Tim's question, but heavens, she thought, it's not a bad deal. From another angle ... not a bad prospect, guaranteed a man plus some pampering, and her

nipples hadn't exactly been the worst source of blissful moments so far.
Give me time to process, Alisha murmured, stretching out in the grass, gazing at the blue sky dotted with small, fluffy clouds, framed by the high cliffs encircling the valley. It was beautiful here, pleasantly warm, but ...
I believe every word, Alisha said. But a real paradise, a fairy-tale land with fairies —er, Peris—and all that, it's hard to wrap my head around.
Hold on, Tim said, I've got an idea. Stay right here.
And off he went. Alisha propped herself on her elbow, watching curiously. What was he up to? She didn't have to wait long—Tim came back, laughing loudly.
Got something!, he shouted.
???
When Tim reached her, Alisha saw he was holding something. A squeaking sound came from his hands.
What's that?
Tim slightly opened his hands. The squeaking grew louder, unmistakably a woman's voice:
You jerk, let me go right now! Hear me? Let-me-go! Aaaaaah!
Tim adjusted his grip, revealing what he held—or rather, what he was *firmly* grasping by the feet: a delicate, tiny, bare-breasted woman with enormous breasts (for her size). She was about ten centimeters tall, wearing a white backless dress —backless because she had dragonfly wings, which she frantically tried to flap to escape. But, as mentioned, Tim held her feet tight.
How cute!, Alisha exclaimed.
A Tila, Tim said. Watch what I do next, he added. To the Tila: Is your milk even worth anything? They say Tila milk around here is a bit rancid. And has a stale aftertaste.
Ouch!, Tim yelped. She bit me!
I'll bite again!, the tiny Tila raged, freed when Tim accidentally let go, yet not fleeing. — My milk's the best, she squeaked, sweet, aromatic, not a bit rancid! No stale aftertaste either. Taste it, you'll see!
Tim said to Alisha: Cup your hand for the milk. — He positioned Alisha's open hand.
The tiny Tila eagerly began milking her massive breasts into Alisha's palm.
Wow, Alisha blurted, watching with fascination. For such a small Tila, she's got tons of milk!
In no time, the Tila filled Alisha's palm. Enjoy!, she squeaked.
The Tila looked up at Alisha expectantly.
Should I...?, Alisha asked, unsure.
Taste it!, Tim urged.
Alisha cautiously touched her lips, tentatively tasting a tiny bit with her tongue, then licked up the whole pool. She smacked her lips, savoring every drop, and

exclaimed: It's amazing! Like ... like ... like candy, but better, more refined!
The tiny Tila thanked her squeakily for the praise, curtsied politely, and buzzed off.
They fly from flower to flower, sipping nectar, Tim explained. Their milk tastes different depending on the blossoms. They bring it home to their men, who laze around. Tila men eat and drink nothing but their women's breastmilk.
Typical, Alisha growled.
Tim laughed. But Tilas are so insatiable that you rarely see a fat Tila man. The more milk they bring, the longer he satisfies her. You can guess what their men endure from the size of their tits.
As if on cue, an especially busty Tila buzzed past, barely staying airborne.
Alisha rolled in the grass, laughing.
Alright, she said finally. I believe everything now. No need to make anything up here. Get specific. Tell me more about this land!
They don't always bite, by the way, Tim said. It's like picking blackberries—you nibble one after another, and sometimes you get pricked.
What? You nibble one Tila after another?
Tasted good, didn't it?
Uh, yeah.
Just don't make one mistake. If you see a meadow full of Tilas, *never* yell that their milk's no good. You'll end up like a bear who stole honey.
Alisha groaned, laughing. Tell me something else...

The Matter of the Good Life

Deal, Tim said. First: imagine dreaming a beautiful dream, guaranteed to wake up if it turns into a nightmare. That's Peridëis. A dream come true.
Now think about what happens in a beautiful dream, how it differs from books, movies, or a vacation. Beautiful, emotional, challenging, interesting things happen. But there's always a limit—what's possible, what's dangerous, what's forbidden. You could, but you mustn't. In a dream, it's different—you can fly, breathe underwater, cast spells, have any adventure, with no barriers. If you're aroused, you can find satisfaction anytime, in any way, without limits. Above all: nothing can harm you, you can't cause harm, and there's no control. What would you do if there were no danger, no bans, no one judging you? That's roughly Peridëis. But it's all real, it really happens. Forget the censored paradise descriptions you've known. You're about to experience something else.
I'm honestly speechless.
No, you're talking.
Alisha laughed.
Nothing can happen to me?
Never.

If I fall off a high cliff?
Like a cartoon. Brief ouch, dust yourself off, done.
If a lion tries to eat me?
It won't. It'll beg for pets.
Really? How cute! But what does it eat?
Salad? I don't know. There's meat to eat, though, just wait.
If someone slaps me?
It stings.
Badly?
No.
If they slap me ten times?
Ten stings.

The Matter of Safety

What if it gets intense?, Alisha pressed. Long captivity, nasty people, whatever.
Fair question, Tim said. It's like waking from a nightmare. If you face something unbearable, there's a green flash, a bang, sulfur stench, and you're gone. You wake up at the passage where you entered Peridëis, on the altar table—here in Peridëis, not outside. But your belongings stay behind; only you get zapped away. You wake up naked.
My clothes?
Drop to the ground. You can also zap deliberately to a chosen place. I'll show you how later. It's called a witch's spell, but 'blitz' or 'zap' works too. The beauty of this failsafe is it always works, no conditions. What matters is how you feel. The big deal is you can safely try risky things, which is a huge draw. The downside? You're out of there. With some edgy stuff, you'd rather choose when to bail, but the failsafe kicks in instinctively. Another downside: Peridëis locals fear witches. After such a stunt, you can't show your face in that area for a while. If you've built something up over time, that can be annoying.
There are two kinds of people and knowledge here. On one side, the Peris and us, considered witches. Peris know and do far more, but we're similar. We're outsiders, like you and me, visiting Peridëis. On the other side are regular Peridien locals. They can't leave. They only exist here and can't do many things we can. Compared to them, we can indeed witch. Even compared to our abilities in the normal world.
Tim laughed.
But you know, Tim added, this is too negative now. Just remember: if something goes wrong, worst case is a green flash, bang, sulfur stench—you're gone. Safe. Reason enough to try bold things.

The Matter of Sex

Tell me a bold thing to try here, Alisha said.

Let's start with the finest paradise joy. You've felt it: you'll always be slightly aroused here. Sexually. It's part of Peridëis. It's like a dream—free thoughts, no duties, no dangers, no diseases. Add constant arousal and no fertility, and you can guess what follows. It's like masturbation fantasies or daydreams, mixed with other desires, sometimes adventures with or without an erotic twist. Here's a shocker: you'll definitely get raped here, multiple times.

I'm swallowing hard, Alisha said. But I suspect I need to redefine that word here?

Yes. It has a different meaning and experience here. Nothing crosses what's in your fantasies or could be. Don't forget the constant arousal you can't escape. So much here is sexually charged and regulated through sex. There's no sexual morality like in the other world. No man needs to ensure his woman is only impregnated by him, raising only his genes. Women can't get faulty genetics, have no maternal care or protection issues, and hold power over men—they need women to survive here. Since nothing serious can happen to you as a woman, 'rape' as you know it doesn't exist. Nor do honor concepts around it. The word's used plenty, but it's like being forced to clean the kitchen when you're not in the mood. Or, positively: someone shoves a sweet in your mouth you didn't want for the calories, but you like it anyway.

Sex is a constant, openly lived part of daily life, and rape is more a rude breach of etiquette, judged by context. It's punished on the spot ... maybe a few sharp whip lashes on the butt, so the rapist gets a lesson and the raped gets satisfaction. Then it's done. Or not at all. If ten guys take you, you hold still, and afterward, they might gift you something as thanks. That's how it goes with men who have a shred of decency.

But against my will is still against my will!

No, *nothing* here truly happens against your will. What happens—or doesn't—always ties back to you in a tricky way. Don't forget that.

OK, I didn't think of that. Keep going!

So the men ... Instead of a gift, they might help with some task afterward. Something like that. It crushes women here more if they're never 'taken'—that devastates them. You can hardly resist the pleasure, that's how Peridëis is. Like the smell of roast when you're starving. Next time, maybe a group of women ambush a handsome guy, tie him up, and have their way with him. Or a woman tricks a man, ties him to the bed, and uses him for her pleasure. Afterward, she pampers him—massages him, indulges him, and, crucially, gives him her milk to drink.

I still don't fully get it, Alisha said. Isn't it still awful? You can't just see it as normal for women to be raped! Uh, or men, of course.

Tim shrugged: Almost forgot the men, huh? Your argument is morality, an external norm. I'm talking about you. If you were cold to it, you'd *never* be raped —it's tied to you. Otherwise, you don't have to come to Peridëis... And if something's truly unbearable, Peridëis yanks you out. Like waking from a nightmare. Period. Bang, green flash, you're gone, back at the passage you entered through. So where's the moral issue?
Still..., Alisha murmured, it's not right.
Want to leave already?
Jerk, Alisha said. You know I don't.
Did you know the Puritans under Oliver Cromwell[19] banned music, dance, theater, even reading anything but the Bible? He wasn't the only one in history. It's been tried again and again. Christians, Muslims, political groups, strict vegans, temperance societies, whatever. It's not just sexuality that's banned and tabooed.
In some Islamic regions today, I think, Alisha said softly, music and dance, I mean.
Yes, Tim replied—or again, and they're not alone. Another topic is masturbation. It harms no one, doesn't hurt your body, and is even good for you. Yet it's often been deemed sinful, with people punished, circumcised, castrated, you name it. Where do you think male and female circumcision in many cultures comes from? Here in Peridëis, sex is fundamental to humans, openly, like eating, sleeping, breathing. I think that was the creator's core idea for Peridëis—this true freedom you only have in your imagination and dreams. Within the limits of harming others, that simple. On sexuality: if a man notices a woman absolutely doesn't want him, he must stop and apologize. You can tell if someone's aroused or not. On the flip side, women here dodge unpleasant chores by offering their bodies in trade. In the other world, that'd be outright prostitution. Here, it regulates life. Got a heavy load to carry? No problem—hey, man, if I touch your cock, does it turn you on? Feel my crotch, notice how wet it is? Go deeper, feel it, smell it? My breasts, run your finger over them ... come on, stick your cock in my hole, yeah, do it, just carry my basket home for me, yes, deep, deeper ... now fuck me. — And you're rid of a chore. People around you go about their day, unless they enjoy watching. Why should it be different if the initiator's a man?
The only restriction, Tim added, is the milk thing: Peridien locals believe breasts, vulva, and penis primarily enable the symbiosis between man and woman, where excess life energy is given and received. Women have more life energy, seen in men's small, usually non-productive breasts, and because men turn satyr without milk.
But there's a logical flaw, Alisha mused aloud. A raping man should lose a lot of energy, based on what you said?

19 1599–1658, Lord Protector during England's brief republican period.

Yes and no, Tim said. It drains life energy, which is seen as foolish. But the man has access to the woman's breastmilk he overpowers. Men here have a trick to hold back their semen during orgasm. It's supposed to be simple and quick to learn...
Supposed to be?
I can't do it. You know why...
Sorry. Go on?
Well, the trick's like what doctors call pelvic floor training. You practice tensing and releasing the pubococcygeus muscle, the one you use to stop peeing. A 'dry run' to learn it. Then, when masturbating, you tense it when you're about to ejaculate. It usually doesn't work first try, and you might get botched orgasms at first. But soon, the man can keep the semen inside. It's said to prolong and intensify the orgasm. Just, I haven't mastered it.
How could you practice?, Alisha said. But if men still orgasm, and it lasts longer, why isn't this trick known in the real world? It'd be a great contraceptive?
Never rely on it for contraception in the other world, Tim growled. A tiny bit of semen can still leak if it's not done perfectly[20]. Here, it's a survival technique for men without a woman for days ... each ejaculation shortens the time a man can go without milk. For men with a steady woman, it's no issue—they're well-supplied and can spill as they please. So women resent men holding back semen. Since it's so valuable to men, it gains meaning for women, regardless of facts. For women, it's a sign of appreciation, symbolizing the man's desire to stay with her. — Unlike rape ... there's no bonding or intimacy, no pregnancy or real danger. Rape here is just raw lust and submission, nothing more. So a man usually won't spill his seed.
Hmm. Hard to decide, Alisha dodged.
She postponed thinking about it and declared her head was buzzing with new info.

The Matter of Milk

There's more to tell, Tim said. Lean back and let it wash over you. If you can't remember something, ask later. I'll be with you this whole trip, so no problem.
So. A man who enters Peridëis uninvited will inevitably waste away in days. No one knows exactly why, and that book you read offers just one of many explanations. But a woman who comes to Peridëis can live, enjoy herself, feel splendid, stay pleasantly aroused, use it for fun, and notice her breasts start to tighten, grow, and produce milk. All women here experience this, and it's a big deal.
Is that why there's that drawing of a woman offering her breasts?

20 Incidentally, this technique is known in Chinese Taoism. There are alchemical teachings that describe exactly this, both retaining semen and absorbing female energy, including from the female breast.

Exactly. There are countless variations of those images and sculptures. The book's story is one explanation, but some say it was like this long before the Peris came, and they stayed *because* of it. Others say the Peris created this land this way, with no one else involved. No one knows what's true, but one story says locals have always had men drink breastmilk. Doesn't matter. The point is, women in Peridëis always have milk[21]. What matters is the result: men can't exist alone here. They need women's breastmilk. Every few days, or they waste away. First mild, then severe pain, until they lose their minds and become beast-like. Hair grows all over, their penis gets huge, they roam forests with insatiable lust, raping anything female, speaking only a few words, understanding little. Pitiful creatures ... called satyrs.

Can't they recover?, Alisha asked. That's cruel!

They can, but you have to catch them first—they're very shy. Opinions vary widely, from fascination to fear, contempt, and disgust. Generally, people pity them, as they're not responsible for their actions. Some fear them, others hate them, and some sneak into the woods, secretly hoping to be ravaged by a satyr. They don't harm anyone, except for raping. A lone woman has no chance—she's fucked until she faints and everything hurts. But no more. It's known, so it's considered a bit indecent for a woman to wander the woods alone ... a minor sin, but gossiped about. To catch a satyr, you exploit their relentless fucking until exhaustion. Then you bind them and give them breastmilk, ideally fresh from the breast, without air or light contact—it's most effective. But they must be bound, as their lust is overpowering, and a woman's scent drives them mad. They'll lap up every drop offered. At first half-forced, but soon willingly. Every time. And they mustn't ejaculate, or as rarely as possible, then they recover. You notice first when their hair thins and penis shrinks, their mind slowly returns, and they start remembering. But they recall nothing from their satyr time—literally nothing. Only the time before, the last being intense pain.

How do you know they're fully healed?

You can free them once they remember and speak normally—their mind's back. Just drill into them not to rape you or masturbate. That works if you keep watch. If their urge is too strong, offer milk immediately. That helps them cope.

But who actually does this ... the huge effort and risk?, Alisha asked doubtfully.

Plenty do, Tim replied. Many women pity satyrs, and there's a program, Voluntary Satyr Year[22], where women selflessly let themselves get thoroughly

21 By the way: A German woman ethnologist reported being laughed at by young Maasai women in Tanzania/Africa for not having milk in her breasts as a woman. "Normal" comes from "norm," which comes from "majority."

22 Goldbrand: Counterfeit brandy with 32% alcohol, of which 10% is real brandy, a good 20% agricultural alcohol, colored brown with sugar paint. Goldbrand was not the worst fake brandy in the GDR and was so popular that it continued to be produced after the end

ravished. It's vital because some unscrupulous women deliberately go into the woods in groups, taking drugs from certain plants that make them submissive but conscious for hours. Guess what happens? — When the exhausted satyr wakes from his trance post-rape, without a fleeing woman to give him a needed break, he finds more submissive victims offering themselves. The raping starts again, over and over, until the drugs wear off and the women flee. Some satyrs have been found with bloody penises, but it's still a massive cruelty. These women brag afterward about how often they were fucked. Not openly, but behind closed doors. At least they can't walk properly for days, as everything's sore, which somewhat limits it. It's been debated publicly, but even strict laws haven't helped...
They really do that? Aren't they hospitalized after a year?, Alisha wondered, not doubting the story's truth.
Nah, Tim said, most of it's just talk—prep courses, bonding circles, discussions, meditations, pelvic floor training, partner exercises, self-discovery, model practice, that sort of thing. And you've got to find the satyrs first.
Alisha writhed with laughter.
When she calmed down, Tim added thoughtfully: Not getting pregnant here probably changes most things, I guess...
That's one thing I don't get, Alisha said, even earlier. It doesn't work—don't you need offspring in reality?! — This time, she had doubts.
No, Tim said, it's true.

The Matter of the Body

Here, women don't get pregnant, and no one dies..., Tim said.
Give me a moment to digest that, Alisha pleaded.
...
It was a strange feeling for Alisha. Her gut said this was paradise, it truly felt like it. I want it, she thought, I want to believe, I'm in a fairy tale. Right in it. Fairy land, underworld, paradise, heaven, Garden of Eden, Valhalla, Elysium, land of plenty, afterlife, whatever.
Hesitantly, Alisha said: I don't want to wake up and it's gone. But ... never pregnant? You know, I get guys saying they don't want a kid *now*. I don't want one *now* either. But I wouldn't want a man who wants *no* kids ever. That's a dealbreaker. I don't want that man.
Tim looked stunned: What's the issue? You can leave Peridëis anytime and return later. You can't have a kid *here*. But outside, you can. Of course. Ten kids if you want. Then come back to Peridëis. Or in between. Kids in daycare? Zip, quick trip to Peridëis. Kids at school? Zip, short visit. Kids at camp? Zip, longer Peridëis

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of the GDR, by several companies in the East and (!) West.

getaway. As often as you like.
I think I want that, Alisha said. I don't know about other women, but that's how I tick—I want a little person growing in my belly someday.
Tears welled up against her will. The scare had hit hard. It was a glitch—Tim had already given all the info. But Alisha had never seriously thought about it. Then the question crashed in, shoving everything else aside. She might've given up eternal life if the price was never nurturing life within her.
Alisha's gaze dropped to her belly.
Suddenly, she screamed: There! Look! — pointing at her abdomen.
What?, Tim asked, alarmed. What is it?
Alisha pointed, stunned, at her lower belly: Look! My scar's gone! From my appendectomy! Completely gone, no trace!
Tim, lying back, laughed. You scared the hell out of me. Don't worry, you'll get your scar back later.
?!
Your Peridëis reflection is your inner blueprint—your body's potential plus your subconscious self-image. A mix that can surprise, as deep desires often clash with what you're supposed to like about yourself. So, no scars. Also no fashion or fakery, which bugs some women at first. Cosmetics, surgeries, fancy hairstyles—gone. Since it affects everyone, the annoyance fades fast. It's relaxing to ditch the fashion dictate. You're here as an avatar, which is why nothing serious can happen and you don't get sick, unless your psyche drags your body down. That's the most rational explanation for Peridëis. It's like a cartoon—you fall from a tree, shake it off, yell a bit, and move on. Someone whacks you with a club—you yell ouch and whack back. It does hurt, but only to a point; intense or lasting pain doesn't exist. If something unbearable happens, the worst is escape. You're yanked out without effort and wake at the Peridëis passage you entered. Like 'back to start' in a board game. Not as punishment, but overload protection, you know?
With my scar?
No, without. You stay in Peridëis, at the passage where you woke up, a safe space within. Leaving entirely is a deliberate act. Only then do you return to the other world's passage—a safe space there. That's when you get your scar, wooden leg, perm, shaved pubes, eyeshadow, or whatever handicaps you had.
Watch it. Then what? If I *don't* leave Peridëis?
You rest, chill, take a bath, whatever. You decide if you go back and what to do differently. Walking back is tedious, there's no other transport, flying as a witch is short-range, but there's zapping. It's like instinctive escape, but deliberate, and takes practice. We'll talk later—one thing at a time. Just know: unlike escape, deliberate zapping isn't foolproof. You need a vivid, detailed memory of the destination. If not: enjoy the hike.

Don’t laugh so smugly, Alisha grumbled. No riding animals?
No. Fast ones cough and you’re down in seconds, others are slow and lazy.
Carriages?
Sort of. Human-pulled. Comfy, but slow and cumbersome.
Witch’s broom?
We covered that. One hour’s flight, broom’s toast, and you can’t walk for a week.
Whaaat, that’s real???
Yes. By your abilities here, you’re a witch. Deal with it. Not quite Peri-level.
Alisha laughed. Suppose I am. Here in Peridëis. Why can’t I walk for a week?
Clamp a broom somewhere and sit on it for an hour. You’ll see.
Fair point. Dragons?
Possible.
Now it’s getting wild. They exist?
Yes, but rare. I haven’t seen one myself. They can be tamed, I’m told, but I doubt they fly far. Others would’ve tried by now. There’s time to experiment here. Speaking of time, one last important thing to tell you.

The Matter of Eternal Life

No one dies here, Tim said. That supports the theory Peridëis is created, not naturally evolved. Let me finish (Alisha squirmed). Every species needs offspring to survive. Here’s one explanation for Peridëis. It’s as unprovable as others, but it seems most plausible to me, with the fewest gaps, and explains your missing scar and why it’ll return. Listen: this theory says Peridëis might’ve been an alien species’ amusement machine, far beyond human tech. They came to Earth, say 8000 years ago—just an example, no one knows. Or they lived here, and Peridëis is their remnant, a gift, or a refuge for a few of their kind. Whatever the case, it was built with Earth entrances to offer some of their species a fun, pleasant, safe stay, short or long. Maybe for fun, maybe a last-ditch haven before slamming the door. Technically, it could be a portal to another dimension we don’t know, or, per another theory, something quantum-mechanical.
Tim paused to think, then continued:
Or these passages are tunnels in the universe to a distant world, but I doubt that. It doesn’t explain why we can’t die here. The mixed-reality idea does. In short: your thoughts and other visitors’ are real, the Peris’ thoughts are real, Peridëis’ core structure is set, but everything else is illusion. A mirror image of you is made, and you enter this illusion as that image, becoming part of it, able to shape it where you are. Your other-world body is ... paused, preserved down to the last atom, until you reclaim it. Your mirrored body here matches your inner blueprint—what you’d be, given your potential, at your current age, with no diseases, injuries, or artificial changes, but with normal development. In Peridëis, only everyday changes happen—bigger breasts with lots of milk, muscles if you work them, or

belly and butt if you eat well.
Damn, I knew the land of plenty had a catch.
Tim laughed. Not quite—you won't get chubby unless you want to. Peridëis adjusts to you, remember? It happens anew each time you return from the other world.
I still age outside, though?
Yes. If you don't want that, stay in Peridëis or minimize other-world time. Your choice. But one practical point: you must've wondered why your breasts got so much attention since the airport.
I thought it was a fetish or something—it felt good. It was about milk? To have milk ready when I enter Peridëis?
Exactly. If you arrive with dormant, virgin breasts[23], it takes longer for milk to come, and the initial tightness would obsess you.
Is it like that later?
No. Your breasts 'remember,' so it's faster. It gets better each time. You can maintain milk flow in the other world. Many do.
Just like that?
Yes. Ideally, a man who enjoys it drinks your milk regularly. Or a girlfriend—that happens too. Or use an electric pump, or hand-milk. Just do it regularly, at least twice daily, and your milk stays. Next Peridëis visit, your breasts tighten a bit at first, but women say it can be pleasurable within limits.
No milk stasis or issues?
Got milk stasis?
No.
Milk flow here isn't as sudden or intense as post-birth. It starts with drops, growing steadily. Breasts adjust better. No infections. If someone binds you for days without milking, you'd feel it. But even then ... when aroused, breasts start dripping or spraying milk in a high arc. Looks pretty.
Seen it?
Yeah. It's a popular joke to show off when it happens. A bit of bragging, you know?
Alisha giggled. — I can imagine.

The Matter of Time Dilation

For the final bombshell of my hopefully not-boring intro lecture ...
Alisha chuckled.
...one last kicker I haven't mentioned: time in Peridëis is stretched. Roughly twelvefold. Stay 120 days here, only 10 days pass outside. Stay 120 years, 10

23 The so-called "dormant mamma," the dormant breast, i.e., a breast made only of fat tissue that produces no milk, exists in no other mammal except humans. It evolved purely as an attractant and contains almost no milk glands.

years pass outside.
So if I have 7 hours outside while the kids are at school, that's 7 times 12, or ... 84 hours in Peridëis, three and a half days, like ... leaving Thursday after breakfast with my husband and returning Sunday evening?
Uh, yeah.
You noticed I slipped a husband into that?
Hey, what's up? You don't have to fool around with others here. If you want *one* man and only him, that's how it'll be.
What about satyrs, for example?
You won't meet them, they won't find you, another woman shows up, whatever. Think of the dream analogy. Or if deep down you secretly crave such an adventure, it might happen, but less directly ... like an anonymous, faceless, impersonal masturbation fantasy. Or you're entirely blameless.
My most common masturbation fantasy, Alisha muttered softly. She snapped out of it and asked loudly:
Could I get as old as biblical Methuselah? He was like 950, I think, and 950 divided by 12 is ... about 80 years.
No. You're overcomplicating. Your other-world body doesn't age at all while you're here. It ages normally only when you're outside. You only *seem* to live forever outside if you leave Peridëis every few centuries for a few days.
Wouldn't it be obvious if I show up at a class reunion looking mid-20s while others are 60 and wrinkly?
Yeah. You gotta be careful.
But death comes eventually?
If you stay outside and live out your lifespan there. Not in Peridëis. At some point, you might rarely or never leave. Unless you want to die. Some consciously say they've had enough and it's time to leave the world entirely. You're not forced into eternal life.
A fair offer, Alisha said.

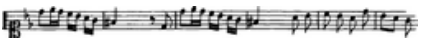
The Matter of Getting Done

Hmm. I think we're done for now, said Tim. Did I miss anything?
No.
What? How would you know?
You've repeated yourself a couple of times.
Try doing it yourself, Tim grumbled.
It's fine, Alisha said, I enjoyed listening.
And she gave him a quick kiss on the forehead, too fast for him to dodge. Her nipple briefly brushed his lips, sending a shiver through her. Alisha needed a moment to let it subside.

They sat in the grass, letting their thoughts wander and lounging. Alisha suddenly noticed the beautiful landscape at their feet again—the lush green, vibrant flowers, the soundscape of various animals, the blue sky, the impossibly high, steep mountains at their backs, and a throbbing where her legs met, along with other symptoms that typically cloud clear thinking. Hmm!, she broke the silence: Speaking of what we just talked about—would you maybe quickly ravish me to make it tangible? Or I could ravish you, so you're completely innocent and can't help it? I'm melting here, through no fault of my own.
No one's buying that you ravished me, Tim laughed. I'm a trained, not exactly inexperienced lone operative, and you're no Amazon! But seriously, I'm even explicitly allowed to oblige you in a certain way—actually, a couple of ways.
Alisha frowned.
Tim now looked directly at Alisha's breasts without averting his gaze.
Alisha finally understood.
I told you, Tim continued, that men here can't survive on their own. That applies to me too. So I want to ask formally, since it'll happen regularly. I need to drink your milk while I'm guiding you here. It might seem odd coming from a guy like me. But I need it, and it'd also be a balance for you being able to find satisfaction in my presence. And it'd be a delight for me ... in every sense.
A wave surged through Alisha from her forehead to her toes, turning into goosebumps and hardening her nipples. — Of course you can, she whispered hoarsely. She cleared her throat and repeated in a normal but hushed voice: Of course you can. As often as you want. Really. I'd never see you as ... a baby or anything like that. Not you, not here, not under these circumstances. Somehow, the circumstances really are ... different. And who knows, maybe that's special too. Knowing others do it would make me curious to try it, even in the ... other world (it still felt strange for Alisha to use that word for the normal world). And apparently, I can't avoid giving milk here more or less constantly anyway. How often does a man need milk?
Tim answered: Really need ... maybe every other day to feel completely well, since I'm not supposed to spill my seed anyway. But it's nicer more often—before bed ... after waking ... for a midday nap?
And with coffee?, Alisha teased, playfully offering a breast.
If it comes up, that too, Tim hedged. But it's not a must. Circumstances decide. Beyond necessity, it's just an everyday pleasure here. Like chocolate or cookies with coffee. And for you, it's especially good because it stimulates your milk production. As a woman here, you should give good milk, or you'll be laughed at. Milk volume increases quickly with regular drinking or milking, much faster than in the other world. So I'd drink your milk whenever I've milked it.
What, you don't want to drink it straight from my breast?! You said it's much more effective that way? — Alisha was genuinely disappointed, tears running

down her cheeks.
Am I allowed? Do you want that? Tim looked at Alisha uncertainly.
Alisha stammered: Yes, of course, I'd love to. Really! Right now! Why not? Don't you believe me? — But ... how does a grown man do it? Head in my lap? Alisha cupped a breast.
No, just like you'd do with any grown man. Side by side. Lie on the grass, Tim replied, it's the most comfortable.
Alisha obediently lay back on the grass, turning left toward Tim. Like this?
Tim settled beside her, facing her. Raise your lower arm above your head—that's best, he said, his face already near her breasts. — You smell different now, you know? Good enough to eat.
I noticed too, Alisha replied, but I wasn't sure. An oddly fresh scent, like I could crawl into myself. Come on already. — And she pressed her left breast to his lips.
Wait, which one did I milk earlier?
Hmm, true, the left. So Alisha took her right, still full breast, guiding it to Tim's mouth, tapping his lips with the nipple. With a contented moan, Tim pressed himself to her breast, seizing the nipple with his lips, drawing it into his mouth, gripping it with his thumb, and finally, his warm, soft lips enveloped her areola. Alisha sighed with pleasure. The hard nipple softened in his mouth, and she felt his probing lips burrow into her breast, beginning to massage, while his palate and tongue pulled at the nipple, sucking surprisingly firmly. He found a quick, rhythmic pace, sucking, massaging, occasionally teasing the nipple with his tongue tip as a reward, then resuming the rapid sucking-massaging rhythm. Alisha relaxed, sinking limply into the grass, wrapping her free arm around his head, and gently kissing his forehead. After maybe two or three minutes, Tim let out a contented moan and shifted to a very slow, deep rhythm. Alisha suddenly felt a tingling restlessness, an itch spreading toward her breast, and she moved to pull his head away to check what was happening. Tim grabbed her with his free arm, pressing her tightly so she couldn't budge his head from her breast. Then she felt a warm, pleasant wave surge through her breast toward the nipple, bringing relaxation. Deep, pleasant relaxation. And she heard Tim swallow rhythmically. Slow rhythm. Deep rhythm. Beautiful rhythm. Drink, Alisha thought, half-absent, drink, drink as much as you can. Suck me dry, empty me. Warm waves enveloped her. A cloud lifted her, and they floated. The world was far away. He sucked at her breast, and nothing else existed, nothing, nothing, nothing. Finally, he took her, even if not penetrating her lap but her mouth. They were physically connected, intimately. And he kept sucking, wringing, sucking, wringing, sucking, with his swallowing audible in between. She felt a bit of milk leak from her other nipple, trickling down her breast. Then the milk seemed to dwindle, as Tim quickened his rhythm. Amid the passing pink mists, it struck Alisha that she wasn't doing anything—it was being done to her, happening to her. Her body

reacted beyond her mind. There! Another soothing wave surged through her breast, Tim moaned contentedly again, his rhythm slowed and deepened, and his swallowing was audible. When the right breast was finally empty, Tim took the left breast on his own, leaving nothing behind. ... Until he finally released Alisha, rolled onto his back, and contentedly threw his hands above his head.
Your milk tastes wonderful, he said. Better than vanilla ice cream, with a hint of chocolate, creamy, and a pleasant, milky aroma when exhaling. The overall flavor definitely ties to your body scent, just as a taste.
Alisha had long rolled onto her back, vibrating her middle finger on her secret spot. It took under ten seconds for all her muscles to tense and explode in a deep, warm, wave-like orgasm. Panting, she lay on her back, seeing stars.
Tim gave her time.
Tim gave her more time.
Eventually, Alisha came to. Beautiful, she said. Wonderful. Both. Having you at my breast and the orgasm. She suddenly turned to Tim, looking at him thoughtfully. But if we do this often, I'll fall in love. That's dangerous, really.
I know, Tim said. Some women only let their own husbands drink directly from their breasts for that reason. You decide if this is okay for you. I've often seen it done anonymously, with a wall, cloth, or something in between. Now I understand why.
No!, Alisha decided. I want it properly. The rest will work out. And now I'm hungry!
Tim seized the moment: You're hungry? — A problem that's no problem in Peridëis, he said proudly, jumping up. Come! I'll show you the wonders of paradise!



The Wonders of Paradise

Naked as they were, they both bounded down the grassy slope toward the trees in the valley, Tim leading the way. He ran straight past a tree with bizarre-looking fruits, elongated but each a different color and size. They reminded Alisha a bit of ornamental gourds due to their variety.
How about those?, Alisha called out to Tim ahead of her, but he waved her off, laughing: Those later, come on!
They kept running. More trees appeared, many with oddly large blossoms in every color, pleasantly fragrant, others with different kinds of fruits. But Tim passed these too. Only when the trees gradually thickened into a light forest did he stop. Alright, he said, here's something interesting. We could've tried the other fruits, but you should start with something special. Look up!
Alisha looked up. — ?!

A schnitzel tree, Tim explained with a sly grin. This area's famous for its Wiener schnitzels. Try one. But pick a ripe one!
Alisha's thoughts raced from hypnosis to delusion to drugs, quickly replaying all the recent events, pinched herself hard for good measure, then plucked a particularly appetizing Wiener schnitzel hanging just above her, almost at nose level, and took a bite.
Hmm.
Wiener schnitzel, she confirmed, and not even canteen quality.
Tim inspected the tree's offerings, picked one for himself, and bit into it. Not bad, right?
Hmm!
The schnitzel didn't vanish; you could eat it, it tasted rich, and you felt your stomach fill. That didn't happen in dreams—Alisha was still in paradise, sorry, Pe-ri-de-is, she stretched the word in her mind. The GDR would be saved with this, she thought.
Alisha wiped her mouth after finishing the schnitzel. What else is on offer?
Everything! But not everywhere—you usually have to search a bit, Tim replied, chewing. But this little grove has a good selection, planted especially to welcome and feed newcomers like you. Rolls are over there.
Rolls?!, Alisha shrieked, horrified. There are fresh rolls growing on trees?!?!
Sure, why not? If you say A, you've got to say B, Tim replied, having just finished his schnitzel. Come over here.
He pointed to a tree twenty meters away. The rolls hung a bit high, and to Alisha's astonishment, she saw a small monkey lounging on a branch, eating a roll.
If only we could climb like that, Alisha said.
No problem, Tim replied, bending down, picking up some fallen fruits, and throwing them at the monkey. One hit.
Idiot, idiot, idiot!, the monkey screamed down at them, hurling what it had in its fury: several rolls.
Thanks!, Tim called, gathering the thrown rolls.
Wait, did that monkey just yell "idiot"?, Alisha asked suspiciously.
It did, Tim answered, already chewing a roll. Animals here can talk. Some better, some worse, some unintelligibly. But they barely understand what they say. That monkey got us right, though, didn't it?
Alisha laughed. True. We should praise him for it.
So they moved from tree to tree, grabbing dessert and nibbling a bit more. Tim tucked some into his backpack for later.
Now for something wild, Tim said, allow me to present: to your left, beer trees. Note, where there's too much sun, it's lukewarm, low-foam, flavorless, and naturally cloudy. The best beer is at cool, shady spots, ideally by a stream or

river.
They searched a while, and Alisha admired the beer bottles swaying on the branches.
Tell me, don't those bottles ever fall on your head?
They can!, Tim replied. So watch out. But right now, there's little wind.
Then they reached the stream where they'd bathed earlier, now gurgling through the orchard.
This tree's probably good, Tim said, climbing up and plucking two bottles.
How do you open them?, Alisha asked, eyeing the odd cork-like stem cap on her bottle.
Simple, Tim said. You bite it—it hurts, so it lets go. Watch!
He bit the stem cork.
A squeaky scream rang out, and Tim pulled the cork by its stem from the bottle.
Cheers!
He raised the opened bottle to his lips. Not bad. Good choice, he said.
Alisha tried it, biting down.
Fieeep!
Now what?
Pull!
Alisha pulled, but the cork was stuck.
You've got to pull fast before the bottle changes its mind.
Alisha bit again.
Fieeeeep!
A quick yank, and the cork came out. Alisha tasted the beer. Hmmmm, nice and spicy, she said.
I like it a bit more bitter, but it's great, no complaints. Beer can't be the same everywhere.
They quenched their thirst with the beer, and when it was gone, Alisha had a thought: Please don't tell me these are deposit bottles you have to return somewhere.
No, you don't. Just toss them into the landscape, and they rot eco-friendly. In a trash bin, it'd be too dry, so that'd be an environmental mess.

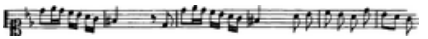
Alisha was full, no longer thirsty, thrilled by the beautiful surroundings, naturally a bit aroused (she couldn't help it), and had a slight buzz from the beer, possibly due to exhaustion from recent days. Now what?
Now I'll pick a few more beers for later, and then we head back. I'll show you where we can sleep comfortably.
They walked back until they passed that strange ornamental gourd tree again.
Tim scratched his head. So you want to know what those fruits are?
Obviously!

Really?
Always!
The buzz made Alisha bold.
Tim circled the tree, searching, and finally picked a medium-sized fruit. It was shaped like an eggplant but smaller, maybe banana-length, just thicker. The color was banana-yellow at the narrower, stemmed end, gradually turning deep orange at the thicker end.
Lie on your back!
Alisha lay down.
Tim held the fruit, warming it with his hands at different spots. Alisha saw it start to glisten and began to suspect its purpose. Sure enough, Tim spread her thighs and slowly inserted the fruit, orange end first, into her. The glistening surface, as suspected, was slick, and the fruit slid in easily.
Whoa, Alisha breathed, it slides in well despite its thickness. — And now? That's not all, I hope?
Wait and see, Tim said, holding the fruit in place with light pressure.
Alisha felt the fruit begin to hum faintly at first.
That feels good, she said, adjusting its position slightly with her hands. Really pleasant, she added as the humming grew stronger.
There's more, Tim said, holding the fruit steady.
Alisha felt the vibration intensify further.
Will it get stronger?, she asked. This alone won't cut it, I think.
No, the humming doesn't increase, Tim said, but that's just a little bonus. The main event is something else—wait for it.
Now the fruit began secreting a generous amount of slick fluid, dripping from Alisha's already wet vulva. Suddenly, she felt the fruit start to expand inside her vagina.
Is it growing?, she asked, already in a slightly altered state.
Yes. Some women get addicted to these fruits, Tim informed her. You'll see...
Alisha saw and felt. The fruit swelled inside her. Not uninteresting, she thought. It swelled more. This is really something special, she mused. The slick fluid poured out of her. The fruit surged again. Fffffft, Alisha pursed her lips. Now it was getting very, very interesting. In fact, it was becoming intense. Good thing she had a buzz. Even more intense. And a bit more. Warm, slippery, and very, very insistent in its stretching. And a little more. Phew!
Just tell yourself a whole baby can fit through there, Tim commented, eyeing her vulva with interest.
You jerk!, Alisha panted, genuinely worried. How big will this thing get?
Varies, but it won't tear you apart.
Great, Alisha exclaimed, torn between arousal and panic. The fruit was lodged tightly and kept swelling.

It’s too much, she cried desperately.
You need to pleasure yourself, Tim said, showing no sign of concern. And relax, don’t tense up.
Easy for you to say! Alisha tried. You idiot, how am I supposed to relax?!
Don’t yell or insult people who only want the best.
Jerk, aaaaah, I can’t get this thing out. Please, please, do something..., she begged.
It’s called a tunnel game, Tim said. Like a tunnel, you can’t get out halfway—you have to go through to the end. That’s the thrill. You experience things you wouldn’t otherwise.
I’ve experienced enough, please, please, please, Alisha pleaded pitifully.
Try it, Tim said, relax your muscles and accept the fruit—it reacts to you, and pleasuring yourself helps.
Alisha hesitantly worked her sensitive spot with her middle finger. The pressure from the fruit made it protrude, making things feel unfamiliar. With her other fingers, she felt the fruit’s protruding part. It had taken on the shape of an oversized smooth peanut—a thick half inside her, a constriction at her vaginal opening, and a thick part outside. That’s why it was stuck. She traced her stretched labia, feeling how far her vagina was distended. It had to be massive; everything felt smooth.
There! Now! The fruit paused.
And now?, Alisha asked nervously. Will it start again later?
It will, Tim said. Especially if you pause like you just did.
Alisha quickly resumed vibrating her middle finger.
But if you orgasm, it stops instantly.
And if I don’t?!
You’ll suffer. Poor you.
Tim didn’t look sympathetic. He seemed fascinated by the game, if not more.
Alisha’s finger vibrated at her spot, a bit frantically. What a dirty trick. Forced orgasm! He’d pay for this. Then she felt the fruit secrete more fluid and swell again. This time, the sensation was oddly different, blending pain and arousal into an indescribable state. She felt the fruit pulsing inside her, easing the pressure, giving her and her stretched vaginal opening a breather. Then it swelled again, maybe even more than before. But it was more bearable now. The fruit eased off slowly, and Alisha’s finger vibrated faster. A quick touch suggested her vulva was stretched to a terrifying width. The fruit began swelling again ... but this time ... now, now, now ... yes, yes, yes, there it was, the orgasm. It gripped the swollen fruit, which seemed to threaten to tear her apart, trying to squeeze, squeeze, squeeze, but couldn’t overpower it, instead enveloping it in an endless, powerful contraction of her entire pelvis. Frozen. Intensely frozen. But then ... finally ... the orgasm weakened and faded. And so did the fruit. All at once. Like air rushing from a balloon, shrinking it, slick fluid gushed from the fruit in

Alisha's vulva until it slipped out onto the grass.
A deep relaxation washed over Alisha.
More.
And more.
Good heavens!
Intense, Alisha said.
(But only after a while.)
Intense, she said, and very arousing. Not for every time. But every now and then, you could do it.
Good heavens. Alisha felt her vulva. Very large, interestingly large, very stretched, but it quickly contracted, pulsing as it did.
There was nothing mischievous about Tim; it hadn't been a cruel prank. He seemed impressed and fascinated.
Your vulva looked beautiful, he said. At its widest, it was about this open: He showed with the thumbs and forefingers of both hands, leaving a gap between the fingers. Alisha looked at him and forgave him. It was indeed an interesting experience, she thought.
When Alisha had recovered, she slowly sat up and looked down at herself. What a mess, she commented. Her stomach, pubic mound, legs, and the grass beneath her were slick.
Never do this without a bathing spot nearby, Tim said, smiling. Come on!
He pulled her up by the arms, and they headed back to their beautiful bathing spot. Her walk to the bath was a bit waddling.
As they lay on the grass to dry, Tim said: We've got food, and for the last thing today, I'll show you our sleeping spot. I think we've had enough for now.
Not me, Alisha said. There are too many interesting things here, and I'm curious. What was that interesting tree called earlier?
Bottle tree. With body heat, moisture, and darkness, the fruits think they're in a vagina and release their seeds as slime, which, by the way, has an aphrodisiac effect on women to keep them from pulling the fruit out too soon. With the wild variety, the woman is induced through pleasure to carry the fruit for a while, spreading it to another place. Eventually, it slips out or can be removed. That's how the tree propagates. Through selective breeding, people have cultivated various bottle tree variants—long, thick, vibrating, expanding. This one was bred for tunnel games. There are also varieties for gay men or anyone wanting to experiment anally. And trust me, people try these trees now and then; the fruits sell well at the market. For me, the bottle tree is also evidence that Peridëis is a created world. A kind of proof of God—tell me, what's the likelihood evolution would produce such fruits? It's far more likely the work of a highly advanced plant breeder in a world without technological progress. Created for the pleasure of its creators, like Peridëis as a whole: an amusement park, adventure park,

experience park, maybe for relaxation, but perhaps also an ideal final refuge.
Alisha giggled: So the bottle tree is another expansion of my horizons, so to speak, meaning we'd need to redefine where my horizons lie in this land.
Tim laughed, stood up, and offered Alisha his hand to rise. Come on, he said, now for the last stop today.
He pointed to one of the towering cliff walls around them and led the way. Alisha followed.



The Abandoned Tavern

They walked, Tim leading and Alisha following, back toward the grotto where they had entered Peridëis, but passed it on the left. To their right lay the forest with its many blossoms and fruits. To the left, up the grassy slope, steep cliffs rose, yellow and reddish-brown, jagged with numerous niches and caves. Birds frequently flew into the cliffs. They must have their nests there, Alisha thought, and it's ideal terrain for climbers. Many parts of the rock were overgrown with plants and flowers. Alisha tilted her head back. No top to the cliffs was visible. It was as if they stretched into the sky.
They had been walking for perhaps ten minutes when the cliff formed a wide ledge into the valley. Tim pointed to the base of the ledge, and Alisha saw a staircase carved into the rock within a wide crevice. The staircase climbed maybe twelve or fifteen meters, narrowing as it ascended, and ended at a bronze door.
Our quarters for the night, Tim called out, you'll love it. Come on! And he waved Alisha over.

Hold on, said Alisha. Before we move on to something new, I want to go over what I've understood—it's been on my mind.
?!
So, Alisha continued, I go to a secret passage point, enter, and lie on the altar. That room is already part of Peridëis?
Yes and no. It's part of Peridëis, but you're still in your other-world body.
Got it. I undress, take a bath, and lie on the altar. Then I'm miraculously transported to a cave, but this time it's in Peridëis.
Yes.
But I don't arrive as myself, but as a kind of ideal copy of myself that never ages. Correct so far?
Correct so far, Tim smiled.
Alright, Alisha went on, so in Peridëis, I have fun in every imaginable, completely harmless way, and if I return after forty years, I don't get my body back in the same condition, but as refrigerated goods, I've only aged one-to-

twelve, so three years, while my friend looks like dried fruit. Right?
Tim burst out laughing. Yes and no. For you, three years have passed, but your body hasn't aged *at all*.
Ah—now I'm getting it better, said Alisha. But time has moved on without me, so I can go out for four hours in the evening and return the same evening, thoroughly rested after four times twelve hours, or forty-eight hours, to my slightly stuffy little GDR? Oh, what a shame (Alisha paused), but I'd have to cross the desert first. So it won't work.
It will, said Tim, there are other passages besides the betrayed one, including one in Berlin. You took this huge detour once to test you, enchant you thoroughly, and ensure that, if betrayed, you could only reveal a barely useful, already-known passage.
Alisha asked, hopeful yet anxious: I could just come here for the weekend?
Yes.
But tell me, if the passage we used is already known, why doesn't the public know about it?
Why don't they know about the latest weapons? — They know this is a hot potato. As for the French, who blew up our passage when Algeria was still their colony, they decided this hot potato was unmanageable. They feared it could lead to discoveries or technologies that, in foreign hands, would be catastrophic for them. Whether that's true is debatable, but they believed it. So they destroyed it, or thought they did, erased all traces, and destroyed all information about it. Except maybe a slim file in a sealed envelope, deep in a locked safe in a secret bunker. And on that file, it says, "Shoot Before Reading!"
What?
Oh, Tim said, it's a worn-out Stasi joke: "VLE"—"Vor Lesen Erschießen!" or "SBR"—"Shoot Before Reading!" is supposedly the highest secrecy level.
Despite the Stasi and the tired joke, Alisha laughed. Tell me, she asked afterward, is it known what the French found out?
Not much, Tim replied. No one knows exactly, of course. They didn't fare much differently than my actual employer: anyone who's been to Peridëis falls completely in love with it and doesn't want it destroyed. And if they say anything, they'll at least heavily distort the truth. But one thing I know for sure: some French agents later became bailiffs.
Alisha laughed.
Tim added: It's hard to find out anything in Peridëis with certainty. Everyone sees a different version of Peridëis; nothing is fixed, incomprehensible forces are at play, things happen that must be considered miracles, and even what I've told you is just one possible explanation. I'm not religious and like things tangible, so I seek or remember explanations that fit my worldview or wishful thinking. You're most likely to find what you're looking for; the hypothesis affects the research

outcome. Plus, Peridëis adapts to my desires. Someone else might see Peridëis as a true fairy-tale world, you know... Everything's there for it! You pass through a secret rock by magic, like Alibaba and the Forty Thieves. You cleanse yourself of the world's dirt and lie on an altar. From there, you vanish from the world and float into a fairy realm where miracles still exist. A land of plenty where the most wondrous things grow on trees, where it's always summer, where witches fly on brooms, where dragons exist, where wild satyrs roam the forests, where you don't have to work and still live well. Where you yourself are a witch and can cast spells.
Teach me as soon as possible.
Have a little patience, and you will. To the locals, you're already a witch, but don't flaunt it.
I'll take the witch over the scientist, said Alisha. And: Come on, curiosity quenched for now, let's go up.

Together, they climbed the rock steps before them. Twelve or fifteen meters is no small feat on an open staircase. Alisha wished for a handrail. The steep staircase commanded respect.
Up there's a tavern, Tim explained, the people of Peridëis have a great fear of heights, and this staircase protects us from their curiosity. They shouldn't know what we visitors do, and we want to be among ourselves sometimes. Over countless years, visitors to Peridëis have created retreats. Near almost every passage, you'll find such a tavern. It's good form to say hello and goodbye when entering or leaving Peridëis. You can also leave a note about where you are in Peridëis, in case something happens.
I thought nothing could happen?
No, or yes and no. Nothing serious can happen to you, and you can escape from anywhere at any time. But if you vanish in front of locals with a green flash and the smell of sulfur, you've outed yourself as a witch in that area, and people almost everywhere are terrified of witches. You can imagine what they think we're capable of. Supposedly, we keep women chained in stables for milking, or worse: we hex away their milk, eat roasted women's breasts in peppermint sauce, and so on. That area would likely be off-limits for you for a long time. With that in mind, you might prefer to be rescued the old-fashioned way by Robin Hood or a fairy-tale prince with golden hair.
Alisha giggled: Can you guys pull that off?
Tim answered seriously: We want our fun too! You can imagine the performances that have happened on such occasions... But it's rare. Usually, there's a moment when you're alone, and that's when you escape. You can usually explain a sudden disappearance—someone freed you, a traitor was found, you bribed someone, something like that.

But how do you actually escape? — I still don't get it.
No problem, said Tim. Let me try explaining it in my dry, materialistic way. Imagine Peridëis is like a dreamed world, except many people dream the same dream at the same time. But nothing is real; it's all simulated by a giant computer from an alien civilization or something. And you dream it as if it's absolutely real in every way. In that case, it wouldn't be a problem to wish yourself to another place, technically speaking. You wish it, and you're there. Done. But in practice, here, it's not that simple because your imagination isn't precise enough. It works reliably only in great fear or danger with the passage, as Peridëis automatically pulls you out, and you land back at the passage you entered through. You don't need to learn that; it's like a built-in feature. It's trickier without fear driving you, if you want to jump to another place. That takes practice, and even then, it only works for places you already know. And you usually don't land exactly at your target but somewhere nearby, depending on your imagination and whether the place has changed. This way, you can quickly reach areas you loved, where you met great people, or where you might've become a queen.
You can do that here?
Sure. You have incredible abilities compared to the locals. Some visitors rule their own kingdoms in Peridëis and mostly go there when they visit. It can be very appealing to build something over a long time. It doesn't have to be a kingdom. I know a woman who's the favorite slave of a sheikh and works an office job in the other world in between. It works best if you don't allow other visitors in your land, as their desires don't mix into a compromise but remain pure and truly individual. Otherwise, you can also fly slowly on a broom or washtub, but only a few kilometers, ten meters high at most, then the tub or broom is done, and so are you. And as I said, I don't know much about flying dragons.
Alisha pinched her thigh again. It hurt.
You can have your own land here?
Yes. But I don't know much about it. Basically, you find a secluded spot. You go hiking, and if you're alone and want it, you'll quickly end up in completely different areas than other visitors heading roughly the same way. The key is doing it alone. If you like a place, you stay, and things will happen tied to your deepest desires, sometimes very mysterious things. But if you bring another visitor, their inner desires influence the area too. That's normal in Peridëis. But there are also tales of Arcana—sealed lands with only one hidden entrance, claimed entirely by a single visitor. The most secret and wondrous things are said to happen there.
... And we should probably get up the stairs, Tim added, or it'll be dark before we make it.

So they climbed the staircase toward the bronze door. It was clear it was rarely used. Only a narrow path remained free of plants, with a sea of vines, leaves, and

flowers covering the steps on either side. Alisha liked it, as the plants might offer support if she misstepped on the steep, long staircase, which had an incline of over 45 degrees. But they reached the top safely.
The large bronze door was adorned with the stylized woman holding her breasts out to the viewer, but this time more detailed, wearing a skirt, with normal feet peeking out from under the long hem. The door was surprisingly secured with a simple internal bolt, its "key" hanging on a wall hook nearby. The "key" was just a bronze rod you slid into a hole in the bolt from outside. You could probably push the bolt aside with a finger.
Alisha had expected a proper lock and said so to Tim.
You can't build door locks in Peridëis, Tim replied. They break, like any somewhat complex mechanism. The staircase is the real barrier. No Peridëis local would dare climb such a steep, high staircase. That's enough. And the bolt suffices for animals.
Tim inserted the key into the bolt and slid it aside. He pulled the door outward. Both had to step back a stair to make room for the door, which opened outward. Come in!

Alisha followed Tim and was, once again, astonished. What a cozy place! — The tavern was carved into the yellow-reddish stone, with numerous large openings to the outside from about waist height upward, letting in bright light. Near almost every window stood wooden tables, adorned with carvings and bronze fittings, and along the wall of the perhaps four- or five-meter-deep room was a sort of bar counter. Ornate wooden shelves lined the wall, holding bronze and ceramic dishware, with some crystal glasses among them; Alisha couldn't tell exactly in the dim back of the room, as most items were covered in a thick layer of dust. Only the front of the tavern was clean, as if regularly used. At the back wall, there were passages and doors.
Alisha looked at Tim questioningly.
Like it?, he asked.
Alisha nodded.
Come, let's sit! Tim headed to one of the tables and spread out the brought-along supper.
Typical man, Alisha commented, don't you have a rag to wipe the table?
Why? Looks decent enough.
You never know.
Come on, Tim protested, why didn't we wipe the meadow or sweep the desert before eating outside?
That's different. It's a matter of principle.
Tim groaned.
Alisha doubled down: Did you know married men live much longer than single

ones?
Tim shot back: So what? Marlene Dietrich said women always want to fix men, but when they succeed, they don't like the result anymore.
Alisha giggled: You could've added that you're not married to me. Alright, compromise: Where's a cleaning rag?
Probably at the counter ... I think.
Alisha rummaged and found something that looked like a rag.
Yuck, said Tim, you want to wipe the table with that? It'll be dirtier than before.
Alisha gave up. Fine, I give up, she said, but put something under the food.
I'll have a cleaning-rag plant installed here as a hydroculture.
Alisha's eyes widened: That exists too?
No idea, just kidding, Tim laughed, but if it doesn't, you could breed one.
Seriously, is that possible?
Sure, Tim replied, clothes are a renewable resource too. Usually fast-growing plants, like a kind of vegetable, because otherwise, cultivation would be too hard. You wait until they're the right size, harvest them, and maybe add buttons, cords, or various trims that grow on other plants.
Then why am I still naked? Are you doing this on purpose to ogle me? Come on, show me where those plants grow!
Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow! Tim raised his hands defensively. Please, not everything at once. We have ready-made clothes here in the tavern.
I want to see them now!
No way!, Tim replied. The evening would be ruined.
Please, please, just one tiny thing so I can see how people dress here.
No!, Tim growled. I'm terrified of the consequences.
Just one!
Grrrr.
Come on, you can choose what it is. Say ... a dress?
There it is, Tim growled, I'm supposedly allowed to decide, but you've already given the answer. Fine. I'll get something, but you stay right here at the table and don't move a millimeter, promise?
Promise.
And I'll grab blindly from the chest and pick some dress. And that's it for tonight.
Promise?
Hmm.
Please?
Promise.
Tim set off. He left the tavern room through one of the passages. Since he returned only ten minutes later, he clearly hadn't grabbed entirely randomly. He held out a garment with both arms. A burgundy garment.
Alisha jumped up. What's that? Show me. Is it stylish? A long dress! Good

heavens, that must've taken so much work—it's made of a thousand pieces.
The dress was primarily burgundy, in various shades, adorned with numerous flat, golden ribbons sewn onto it.
Alisha turned the dress this way and that. Isn't the neckline a bit low?
Try it on, Tim replied.
Alisha slipped the dress on. It fit like a glove, except her breasts wouldn't quite fit.
Come here, Tim said. Stop fidgeting, or I can't adjust the dress. He pulled Alisha's breasts out of the dress. In Peridëis, they're worn outside.
!!!
And look here, he added. The skirt is made of several vertical fabric strips. So you can be taken at any time, from the front or back. And no underwear is worn here.
But that's impossible, Alisha objected, at least for practical reasons. What do you do when you have your period?
You don't have one here, Tim said. Most women don't, or only very lightly. Probably because of the milk. But that's not the point. In the past, women in the other world didn't wear underwear either. Really! That's why skirts or dresses instead of pants. Because of periods. And the first women's underwear was open at the crotch. For the same reason. And why the breasts are worn bare isn't hard to guess, is it?
Because of the milk?
Exactly. Women's milk—milking or drinking—is part of daily life, so breasts are very much in focus. Did you know that in the other world, men almost always look at women's breasts first? They figured that out with cameras tracking pupil movements. Here, it's even more so, and the flow of milk, good or bad, is a constant topic, like the weather in the other world—what supposedly increases milk, what reduces it, how the neighbor's to blame for today's poor flow, you could get worked up about her forever, or the man brought nice flowers today, so of course the milk flowed better, and so on. But women also enjoy showing them, out of pride and a basic feeling. And men openly debate which breast shape is best—large, small, firm, sagging, or whatever.
Sagging breasts too?
Yes. They're supposedly the best milk-givers. There's no "standard breast" ideal here, since everyone constantly sees that all breasts are different. Or because you don't see maiden breasts here—once the breast is active, it looks completely different. Hiding your breasts would be unthinkable. People would immediately whisper about what's wrong with you. But this applies to the whole body too. It's less hidden here, so there are fewer taboos and shame objects, but more openly expressed preferences for certain physical traits.
Alisha looked down at herself: Is there a mirror here?
Come on! — Tim pulled Alisha to the end of the tavern room, where window

openings lined up one after another. At the end was a doorway, and beyond it, slightly to the left along the rock, another room with more window openings. Just to the left at the room's start was a large mirror set into the rock wall, stretching from floor to nearly the ceiling.
Alisha twisted and turned in front of it.
You look stunning in that dress, Tim said.
Alisha thought so too. The dress reached almost to the floor, with a narrow waist that accentuated her hips, and the top with a collar and long sleeves framed her bare breasts. Between her breasts, the fabric rose in a stiffened strip, giving each breast its own round frame. The breasts were otherwise bare up to her neck and appeared larger due to the dress's cut.
Chic, Alisha said. And you can really walk around in this every day?
Of course, Tim said. It's an everyday dress for the city. For hiking, you'd need something shorter, but we'll find that. Tomorrow!
Alisha laughed. Don't worry, I won't nag. I can't get enough of looking at myself anyway. Speaking of, since you mentioned maiden breasts earlier ... could it be my breasts have grown quite a bit? The areolas look bigger and darker too...
I think so, said Tim. Didn't I tell you two cup sizes more is possible?
Do you realize what you're saying? That it's not just wishful thinking?
Why?, Tim asked, confused, trust me, it's true. On average, I mean.
Alisha turned back and forth in front of the mirror: They're fuller, especially from the side. You have no idea what that means. You could get rich just promising it. But you'd be filthy rich if you offered *that* trick back home as a treatment or something. Women would flock in droves, throwing themselves at your feet for an appointment.
There's a catch, Tim said, it only lasts as long as you do something with your breasts. Here in Peridëis, it's no issue—the natural conditions and whole society are geared toward it. But in the other world, would you sit down twice a day or more to milk or massage your breasts or at least use a breast pump? I've only read about something like that in Chinese Taoism, but there it had a kind of religious basis.
How so?
It was a regular breast massage called the "Female Deer Exercise." According to their teachings, it was about special energies women had in excess, which could be released mainly through saliva, breasts, and the vagina. But these massages were also practiced by nuns to suppress menstruation, which they saw as an energy loss.

Isn't that a contradiction in itself?
Yes. But maybe it's also about regulation. And beyond

that, breast massages for suppressing menstruation were also used for contraception and against menstrual pain. Not to mention teachings that a man could gain female energy through the fluid of the breasts. But still, it's a lot of effort, and all without a guarantee.
Hmm, Alisha mused, I think I'd be willing to do it just for the breast size alone. But I get what you mean—most people want it for free. Pop a pill and done, or something like that.
The Peridëis visitors all regularly work on their breasts in the other world, Tim replied, and they enjoy it. Strictly speaking, it's not even necessary. But it's like chocolate. It's not a *must*. But you'll probably need a bit of TLC before I can let you loose among the locals.
Alisha stuck out her tongue at him.
Tim laughed. Your milk's already enough for me. But don't be disappointed when you leave Peridëis. The splendor will temporarily vanish, and you'll get back the exact breasts you entered Peridëis with. Some women cry for days over it. Besides me, that was the second reason for the big fuss with your breasts since you arrived by plane. This way, the drop isn't so harsh. But it also helps knowing it all works with your own body and functions well. With enough attention to the breasts, milk production ramps up quickly in the other world too, and the breasts develop to their full glory, including beautiful nipples. The easiest way is to make milking a fetish outside Peridëis too. Not a burden, but a pleasure. Such a breast-and-milk fetish exists among people who've never had anything to do with Peridëis. Even among indigenous tribes.
But doesn't that require a man?, Alisha pressed.
Less of a problem than you think, Tim growled. Change of topic—eat, milk, sleep?
In that order!, Alisha laughed.
They returned to their table near the entrance and enjoyed the picked food, savoring the view of the dreamy wide valley through the rock arch, flanked by yellow-red, seemingly endless cliffs covered in vines and small plants, with lush green meadows and forests dotted with blossoms below. The air was fresh, the temperature still pleasantly warm, and birds chirped, trilled, sang, and cackled. In short: supper was a delight, and the picked foods were delicious. Alisha, of course, kept on the beautiful breast-baring dress, while Tim remained naked.

When they were finally full, Tim said: Come, I'll show you how women in Peridëis are conveniently milked. He headed to one of the doorways leading into the rock, and Alisha followed. Beyond the door was a short rock corridor adorned with colorful ornaments on the walls. Then came another door, followed by a staircase curving gently to the right. They climbed it and entered a room similar to the lower tavern room: large rock-hewn arches let in plenty of light, and the

room stretched along the cliff's outer edge. But the furnishings were entirely different. The room contained numerous odd wooden structures, richly decorated with carvings and bronze fittings, whose purposes weren't always clear to Alisha—chairs, benches, tables, bizarre frames. She had a hunch about their purpose but asked anyway:
What kind of room is this?
What do you think?
I'm not sure...
Come on, guess out loud.
Really...
And? You must have an idea.
...Well, it reminds me of a medieval torture dungeon.
If it were, would you be stammering like this? Come on, second try.
Is ... does ... this room have something to do with sex?
Exactly! It's a well-equipped playroom. Every good tavern in Peridëis has one; some specialize in certain preferences, but there's always a bit of everything. This, for example, is a comfy massage table; you can strap yourself onto this trestle for fucking; this is a chair for the same purpose; that's a swing, also for the same purpose; here's a stretching rack; an Andrew's cross for tying up; in this cabinet, there's various single-use small toys; and on the wall, ropes for binding, crops, whips, and such ... and so on. Just so you've seen it. Check it out later somewhere else when people are playing. Most are fine with spectators if you keep a minimum distance. But the milking room isn't here—it's one floor up.
Alisha stared, captivated, into the room. And if someone doesn't want to?
They don't join in. Or do something else.
But the bindings!
You make it clear beforehand what you want.
And if it goes too far?
Peridëis pulls you out of the situation. You just need to judge what you can and want to handle. And if the other person screws up, some appropriate compensation or whatever is expected.
But how does a whip work in sex ... do you just hit with it?
Not anymore, Tim said—and definitely not before milking; it reduces milk yield.
Tell me!
You always start very gently and slowly feel out what feels good and what doesn't. Same with everything else—binding, submission, humiliation, role-playing, whatever. Sex here is celebrated as play, as letting go, as uninhibited within set boundaries, as releasing, forgetting the mind, and embracing the animalistic. That fruit from the bottle tree earlier was similar. But come on, I'm getting tired—let's go one floor up to the milking room.
Please—one more thing.

Yes?
Have you ... would you ... if you (Alisha blushed) have you ever done that with a woman?
No, Tim said. I've only seen it often.
Aren't you allowed?
I am.
And you didn't want to?
Honestly—it's fascinating.
But why haven't you, if you're allowed?
I don't know. No opportunity, wrong mood, not the right woman?
Would you want to tie me up and whip me? Just a little?
Would you want that?
Yes. This room fascinates me. I can't describe it. You know—I had fantasies pretty early on about being tied up by a man, or even several men, and taken. I've never told anyone. And now I'm standing in this room, hearing that others have done such things here before. Actually done them! Can you imagine what that does to me? — But my fantasies were vague and faceless. It was just clear they were men, but nothing beyond capturing and binding. What came after was unclear. Now, in this room, it's suddenly very vivid. Like a continuation of those fantasies.
Tim hesitated ... Give me some time, he asked. You know, it completely contradicts my upbringing—and everything we're told about men and women. I've completely rejected those dark sides so far.
Alisha quickly interrupted: It contradicts my upbringing too, and everything else. But I want to know ... would you spank my bare bottom ... properly ... if I explicitly ask you to? At my own risk? And to see how it feels for you?
Can I answer tomorrow?
You can!, Alisha beamed, giving him a quick kiss.
Then I can breathe again, Tim said. Let's go!
Next to the doorway they'd entered the playroom through was a similar one, leading through another door and up another staircase to the milking room.
It's always much calmer here than downstairs, Tim said as they entered the milking room.
This room, too, had the same large rock windows and similar dimensions. But the setup was different. There were several large benches resembling massage tables with various cutouts. Their use was clear: cutouts for the breasts to hang freely downward, a cutout for the face so you didn't have to turn your head while lying on your stomach, straps for securing, blankets, cushions, pillows. And beneath the table was a smaller second table, likely for a bowl to catch the milked milk. Tim also showed Alisha a corridor sectioned off with boards that had openings at breast height. — Here, milk can be drunk anonymously from the breast, Tim said,

men and women don't see each other.
But there were also simple recliners and other structures. Alisha saw a tilting board like the one she'd encountered at the airport, swing-like setups, booths resembling confessionals, and more. But by the large windows, there were also regular tables with chairs, each with a narrow, rectangular stool on top. She pointed at one — And how do those work?
Come on, we'll use one right now — sit on the chair.
Tim rummaged in a cabinet and returned with a small bottle and a colorful bowl. These grow on trees too, he commented with a wink. Every size and quality. He sat across the table from Alisha and slid the narrow stool toward her. Then he explained: You rest your face on this. Simple. And you support your face with your hands.
Alisha obediently raised her arms, placed them on the stool, and rested her forehead on it. A comfortable position, she found.
This bottle has wonderful oil, Tim said, now sitting in front of her. It lets hands glide easily over the skin, helps you feel the breasts better, doesn't stick, and you only need a little. It's completely neutral in every way and tasteless.
Tim spread the oil on Alisha's breasts with his hands and began massaging them. It felt oddly different this time, more relaxing and very pleasant. Alisha purred, sinking into the sensation. Tim was masterful. He kneaded her breasts, wrung, shook, massaged, explored their deep structures, didn't neglect the bases under her armpits, worked up to the very tops of her breasts, providing relief, circled her breasts several times to leave no part untouched, and left the areolas and nipples waiting a bit longer. Everything was kneaded, massaged, loosened, except the nipples. This guy would be a secret gem back home, Alisha thought; women would grow breasts just to attract him. But now Tim began slow wringing motions, focusing on the right breast, gripping it, reassuring the left breast it wasn't forgotten, feeling a plump spot in the right breast, and gently, very gently, wringing it toward the nipple. Finally, the areolas and nipples got their share. Tim wrung carefully toward the nipple, not stopping until he'd pulled it completely through his thumb and forefinger. Then the same spot again, then carefully nearby, very rhythmically and firmly but with gentle, exploratory feeling, moving to the next spot, wringing forward to the nipple's end. That's how Tim got the first squirt of milk. Only later did Alisha feel the familiar restless sensation and pulling from the breast bases through her breasts. Hold still, Tim whispered. Alisha held still. And Tim wrung squirt after squirt, stream after stream, pulled at her breasts, gripped them firmly, wrung again. Alisha heard the milk splash into the bowl; Tim seemed to make the sound deliberate ... and as soon as one milk source in the breast was depleted, Tim's hands sought the next, found it, and exploited it mercilessly. Milk source after milk source, until the last droplets from the deepest corner of the right breast were milked. Then both hands moved to the

left breast, kneading, stroking, coaxing it to yield its treasure, until it willingly began squirting under the pull of hands that, in the moment of the left breast's flow, slowed markedly but pulled more firmly, covering every spot, until the left breast gave up, exhausted. Yet the relentless hands returned to the right breast, coaxing until it had no choice but to yield milk again, exhausting it once more, then switching again. Until nothing came but single droplets. Only then did the tireless hands rest, stroking Alisha's breasts one last time, as if praising them, and finally, the hands were satisfied.

Tim's voice was barely audible: Come back slowly, your breasts are completely empty; they gave milk wonderfully.

Alisha opened her eyes but was mentally far away. She saw her surroundings only blurrily and sighed. Why hasn't this caught on?

It has, Tim said, here in Peridëis, at least. It's your right here. The deal is: plenty of milk comes if you treat the breasts well. Men are rewarded for rewarding the breasts. It was no different with wet nurses in the past: they were pampered and coddled to ensure their milk didn't dwindle or turn bad. Good wet nurses were highly paid women.

Alisha slowly came back to herself, glancing at Tim and thinking, why were men like this always unattainable? Tim was a master, educated, understood women, yet stayed masculine without letting her get away with everything. What a waste to let such men live in celibacy, out of reach even for fairy queens. Stop, she thought. Not true. Those damn Peris could have him freely; their hairs should be plucked out one by one. No, she thought next, don't be unfair—it was the Peris who assigned this man to you. You just can't have all of him, and Peridëis as its own world was a wish-dream come true.

Her gaze fell on the milk bowl beneath her. Impressive! It wasn't a small amount Tim had coaxed out of her.

Don't you want to drink my milk?, Alisha asked.

I do, Tim replied, but I wanted to give you a moment. May I?

Alisha nodded, watching his lips intently.

Tim raised the bowl to his lips, tilted it, and Alisha saw her milk begin to wet his lips and disappear into his mouth, saw his mouth pause, savoring the taste with a click of the tongue, until the last drop of her milk was drunk. Many minutes of milking, mere moments of drinking. But Tim was satisfied. Alisha savored it.

And now we should probably sleep, right?, Alisha asked softly.

High time, I'm beat, Tim replied.

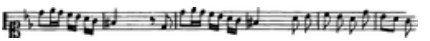
They climbed another floor and found a long corridor alternating between open terrace spaces and countless chambers, each with a wooden door. It was getting dark outside, so the corridor was dim, just barely lit by the open terrace spaces.

Need to go again?, Tim asked.

Alisha did.

They went to the end of the corridor, where there was another wooden door. Behind it, a steady rushing sound, like a waterfall, could be heard. But Tim opened the door just before it.
The toilets here are a bit medieval, he said, you'll have to get used to it.
Alisha saw a wooden toilet seat right by the window. Directly behind it, a strong stream of water flowed through a stone channel, like an aqueduct, splitting into a sort of sink on one side and into the toilet hole on the back.
Yikes!, Alisha said, peering into the toilet hole. It led outside, and whatever you dropped fell into the depths with the water.
Since Tim made no move to leave the bathroom, Alisha sat down in front of him without fuss. How convenient that the skirt of her dress was made of strips, or it would've gotten wet in the back, as the water, pleasantly warm, swirled around her backside.
Tell me, aren't there separate men's and women's toilets here?
No, Tim replied, there's no such separation in Peridëis, not for washing or anything else. Why would there be? No pent-up urges here.
Alisha managed to let go and relieve herself. Not just pee—the rest had to come out too. Not long ago, letting go under these circumstances would've been much harder, but that seemed worlds away. Worlds? It was worlds.
Tell me, she asked, I don't think water alone is enough—how do you do it here?
With your left hand, Tim said, you've got plenty of water to rinse.
Hmm. Unusual. On the other hand, Alisha thought, other cultures do it too, so...
The abundant water helped immensely in overcoming inhibitions, and she definitely felt cleaner afterward.
Oh, right, there was the sink too.
And how do I dry off now?
Hop around, Tim said, chuckling.
You damn jerk! A splash of water hit Tim's face.
Come on, he said, it works without hopping. Look here.
A strong stream of warm air flowed from a hole in the wall.
Hold your lap in front of it, and it'll dry quickly.
Alisha was, once again, amazed. How does that work now?
Backpressure, Tim replied. Wind always blows through the valleys, and they just carved a passage from the other side of the cliff to here. The air gets compressed on the other side and forced through the passage until it exits here. Costs nothing, maintenance-free, and good ventilation too.
Alisha twisted and turned in the pleasant airflow until she was dry. Then Tim led her to her bedroom at the other end of the corridor.
The bedroom, like the other rooms, had a large rock window, and inside stood a large wooden bed with a mattress and light blanket. Who keeps all this in order?, Alisha wondered, but the thought of sleeping was now stronger than anything

else. Unfortunately, she had to sleep alone in her bed, with Tim in the next room beyond the next terrace—such a shame. But he left no doubt about the finality of the sleeping arrangement and stayed in the corridor. So Alisha entered alone, letting her dress fall to the floor as she walked. Should she have washed up? No, not tonight, and it was almost dark anyway. Only the moon and twinkling stars provided minimal light. Good night, Tim, you did everything perfectly and sent a happy Alisha to bed. Sleep well, Tim, and dream something nice. Alisha flopped onto the bed and pulled the blanket over herself. A quick self-pleasure? Her middle finger tapped her sensitive spot to test. No, too tired, she decided, but left her hand there and sank into a deep, exhausted slumber.



Intershop[24]

Wake up, out for morning exercise!
Whoosh—the blanket was gone.
Alisha blinked into the bright daylight. Hey, you jerk! — She protested, reaching for the blanket, but it was already out of reach. Alisha opened her eyes fully and was instantly wide awake: Help!, she cried. — What do you look like?!
Indeed, Tim, standing in her bedroom by her bed, looked ... well, somewhat different than before. He was dressed, but that wasn't the main thing. The point was that he was wearing a uniform. And not just any uniform—no, it was, of all things, the kind Alisha knew from home, like those worn by border guards. Not the bottle-green of the police, but the stone-gray of the army and the Stasi. The shoulder epaulets were missing, though, and the uniform cap bore not the GDR emblem but the symbol of a woman thrusting her breasts toward the viewer. To top it all off, he wore a brown leather belt with a sort of riding crop on the left side and a coiled piece of rope on the right. The gear on the belt reminded Alisha less of her homeland and more of times when valiant men carried sabers or clubs. And of the Wild West. Both at once.
Alisha sat up completely.
Oh my!, she shrieked, what's that? — and burst into laughter.
Beyond the strange uniform, there was something particularly noteworthy: the part of the uniform pants where the penis would be was cut out. The penis was entirely exposed, otherwise the uniform was complete, except for the shoes. Tim, incongruously with the uniform, was barefoot.
What impressed Alisha most about this getup was the exposed penis — And what

24 Intershops were state-run stores in the GDR where coveted Western goods could be bought, but only with foreign currency ("West money"), which GDR citizens theoretically couldn't access.

if you get a hard-on?
Tim growled. Then everyone can see it.
Alisha stayed cheeky: Imagine you as a soldier, honor guard in Berlin Unter den Linden[25]. Then the officer—or, heck, a strict dominatrix—barks: "Attention! Preeeeesent penis!" And bam! They've got to be up.
Ohhh, Alisha pressed on, don't be offended, I'm calming down already. But who comes up with ideas like that? Or did I just say something stupid? What's it mean?
Tim answered matter-of-factly (though slightly red in the face): This is the uniform of the bailiffs. Bailiffs are spies or other intruders caught in Peridëis and put into the service of the Peris. The Peris have a peculiar sense of humor and thought it was hilarious to have someone run around like this.
Do you find it funny?, Alisha asked Tim.
No. But it's meant to humiliate me, or us. This uniform marks my role and reminds me of my duties, but ranks me below the visitors. That's probably it. But whatever, as I said, it's a real opportunity, and I'd put up with a lot more to be in Peridëis. Bailiffs used to wear different clothes; now it's this. Oh well.
Sorry, said Alisha.
It's fine, Tim replied, I'm the one who shocked you. Come on, breakfast is ready.
Alisha slid out of bed, saw her splendid dress on the floor, and felt ... really good at the sight.
Where can I wash up?, it occurred to her. And I need to pee, too.
Tim's eyes lit up: I almost dragged you straight to breakfast, but we've got a washing facility here like you've probably never seen. Come on!
Alisha followed him through the corridor and, at the end, ducked into the bathroom to pee.
No need to wash up much, said Tim, I've got something better!
When Alisha was done, Tim opened the door at the end of the corridor. It led outside.
Alisha stepped through.
Amazing!
They stood on a sort of rock terrace. Behind them, the door led back into the tavern, but in front, the rock formed a niche to the left, secured on the right with a waist-high wall to prevent falling. Opposite them was a rock bench, but to the left, a strong stream of warm water gushed and gurgled from the wall into a basin perhaps a meter deep. Excess water flowed through a channel to the waist-high wall, out through an opening, and plunged into the valley below. The basin was about four meters in diameter, with a small stone staircase for entry and seats around the edge. On either side of the basin stood life-sized stone female

25 A well-known tourist attraction in East Berlin before 1989: The honor guard on the street *Unter den Linden*. Two soldiers stood motionless at attention with rifles.

sculptures, spraying water from their breasts into the basin. Climbing plants and colorful flowers on the rock completed the scene.
Alisha tested the water with her toe and dove in with a squeal. The waterfall crashed over her. Spluttering, she poked her head out. And you?
I'll use all my skills to get you out of here, since we need to get going today, and I see that plan in jeopardy. But wait ... how about some stylish clothes?
Did I ever tell you you're a jerk?
I vaguely recall.
Sighing, Alisha climbed out of the basin. Should I hop around to dry off, or is there a natural hairdryer here too?
You're in paradise, Tim informed her, of course there is.
And indeed, at the level of the stone bench at the end of the niche was a walled hole, from which a strong stream of warm air flowed.
Alisha dried off thoroughly.
First, I'm hungry, she decided. It wouldn't bother me that I'm naked and you're not.
And she raised an eyebrow, glancing at his exposed penis.
It seemed to swell slightly. Just a bit.
But Tim turned and led the way. Along the way, Alisha slipped into her splendid dress, which left her breasts bare, and then they headed downstairs.

Down in the tavern, Tim had already set a table near a window arch by the exit door. The tabletop was practically groaning under the weight of all the items he had apparently freshly gathered from outside. Had he been awake for hours? It was hard to explain otherwise. There were even coffee and fresh rolls. And the table was spotless.
Alisha sat by the window, and Tim took the seat across from her.
Tell me, Alisha asked, where'd you get all this stuff? You can't tell me fresh rolls grow on trees here and coffee comes ready-made from a spring?! Or do they? Hey, say something!
Alisha was genuinely unsettled. Part of her hoped it was true, but surely it went too far somewhere.
Tim just grinned.
Alisha kicked him under the table, but not too hard.
You want to know?, Tim teased.
Of course! Right now!
Tim dipped his finger into the coffee pot on the table. Hmm, he said, it's gone lukewarm anyway. Come on, I'll show you where this stuff comes from.
They got up again, and Tim, coffee pot in hand, beckoned Alisha to a door next to the bar. Behind it, a corridor stretched about twenty meters into the rock. At the other end was another door. Tim led the way and opened it. As Alisha passed

through, she found herself in a sort of rock courtyard, maybe a hundred by a hundred meters, enclosed by cliffs. The courtyard was bright, despite its size, given the towering cliffs, but the sun stood directly overhead at its zenith, creating a cozy, almost grotesque paradise garden between the steep rocks.
The courtyard was clearly the tavern's garden; there were various trees, flowerbeds, a water basin, and even a bench for resting.
Here you'll find everything your heart desires, Tim commented with a smile, or at least every culinary delight the tavern has to offer, ready to pick. Rolls are back there on the left tree, and with the coffee fruits here in front, you need to be careful not to scald yourself when you pierce them...
(Alisha: !!!)
...oh, and here comes a ham pig.
A what?!, Alisha screeched.
A ham pig.
He let out a piercing whistle, and the pig came trotting over, grunting.
If you want ham, Tim explained, you just cut it right off the pig—smoked ham from the hindquarters, boiled ham from the front.
But doesn't that hurt the poor pig?
No idea, said Tim, it squeals, but oddly, it holds still and offers itself up, as if having a piece of ham sliced off is a pleasure. And don't worry, the spot grows back quickly.
The pig seemed to agree, nudging its snout against Tim's legs and looking up at him with a puppy-dog stare, as much as a pig could manage.
Not now, Tim said, we just need fresh coffee.
Disappointed, the pig trotted off. Its grunting sounded faintly laced with rude curses.
Alisha stared after it, mouth agape.
Tell me, someone must maintain all this?
Dwarves!
Dwarves?
Yeah, little creatures who find deep satisfaction in serving others. That's why they seek out human company. You just need to loudly praise how great everything is now and then, but not too often, because it excites them so much that they usually seek immediate gratification.
Sexual?
Yes, outright sexual. So it should be clear why you haven't seen any yet.
?!
The way you're constantly raving about everything here, they're probably all lying in a corner, screwing and masturbating, unable to stop. It'll take them days to recover.
Are you pulling my leg?, Alisha asked skeptically.

No, Tim laughed, I only exaggerated a tiny bit. Normally, they'd rather suffer until they're *really* sure they're not missing out on serving. Once satisfied, they're so lazy for at least an hour that you could thrash them, and they wouldn't lift a finger for you.
Tim poured the contents of the coffee pot onto the ground and plucked a fruit from the coffee tree. As if the creator of Peridëis had played a joke, the fruit looked like an oversized coffee bean. Tim rhythmically and gently twisted and pulled at the stem until it came free. And indeed: steam and the aroma of coffee rose from the fruit. He poured its contents into the pot and nodded toward the door: Come on, I'm starving—let's finally eat breakfast.
They returned through the corridor to the tavern and sat back down, now with fresh coffee between them.
As the coffee was poured and the first roll buttered, Alisha's gaze finally drifted outside again. The view into the rock valley, with its lush green and vibrant flowers, was a dream you could've turned into cash elsewhere.
Tell me, Alisha asked, why is the tavern completely empty, and there's no one here but us?
Tim chewed, then answered: Near most passages between the other world and Peridëis, there's a tavern where visitors like to meet, talk, and start their journeys, but this passage here is ... well ... a bit out of fashion. It was betrayed and someone tried to destroy it. Passages react strangely to such attempts; I was told that if you manage to damage one, which takes great force, very strange, inexplicable, and often dangerous phenomena occur later, which you can't always predict. You experienced it yourself. You don't use such a passage unless absolutely necessary, but the potential betrayal of another passage is such a necessity. The trick is really just this: once you've been to Peridëis willingly and without coercion, you'll fall so in love with it ...
Already have, Alisha murmured.
... that you'd (Tim smiled briefly) hardly betray it, at least not the most important part: how to get there.
Why are they so sure this passage is broken?, asked Alisha.
Tim swallowed: They detonated an atomic bomb a few meters away.

Alisha gasped and swallowed hard. That much effort?
That much effort, Tim echoed. They saw it as a threat.

Don't dwell on it, Tim added, what's done is done, and you're here now. There's no danger for you here, and I'm supposed to talk myself hoarse to drill that into you if needed. But there are adventures here that any writer would sell their soul to harvest for stories. Enough for everyone, and different for each. I'll show you! — But on another note, I promised you a nice dress yesterday, one suitable for

hiking. Have you finished eating?
Done! Alisha was fired up again. Show me something that satisfies even my wildest wishes!
Then come on.
They headed back to the stairs but went one floor lower this time. Light filtered through holes in the wall onto the steps, but it grew darker below. Tim went to a wooden chest at the start of the corridor, and when he opened it, Alisha saw numerous torches inside. Tim took two and closed the lid. Watch this, he said, magic, magic, abracadabra, let there be light! — He pulled a sort of cork from the top of the torch, and it suddenly began to burn with a bright flame on its own. — Pretty good, huh? An instant torch, so to speak.
How's it work?, asked Alisha.
There's a kind of resin up there that ignites on contact with air.
Let me guess, Alisha said, there's a tree with fruits that grow this resin, right?
Damn, you learn fast, Tim laughed. But in this case, I can't give you the exact details—I just know how to use these things and that you shouldn't burn your fingers. Come on, take the other one!
Alisha took the second torch, pulled off the cork, and sure enough, a bright flame flared up from her torch too.
You've got about an hour to pick a dress, Tim teased, but it can be less. If so, find one of the torch holders on the wall and stick it in there, done. But come on.
At the bottom of the stairs, several corridors branched off into the rock. Tim chose one. Wooden doors lined both sides of the corridor, leading who-knows-where. A faint breeze wafted through, suggesting another exit or at least a vent somewhere. After less than a minute, they reached their destination; Tim stopped at a door and covered a small wooden sign on it with his left hand. "Intershop" is written here, he commented, in here, you'll find everything your heart desires. All free, but one thing you don't have endlessly: time. In just under an hour, you'll be in the dark.
But why, Alisha protested, there were more torches in the chest?
You've got to be kidding, Tim growled, only a woman would answer like that. You've got one hour, no more—could you maybe think a little about poor me? So get in there and don't waste time!
He opened the door.
Alisha expected a room but saw another corridor. This one wasn't empty, though. It resembled a dressing room, with countless hooks on both walls, clothes hanging on hangers as far as the eye could see, interspersed with wooden stools, mirrors, and numerous torch holders. A faint air movement was noticeable here too.
The clothes were wildly varied: black, red, or brown leather, different fabrics, rubbery dresses, dresses made of metal chains with or without adornments, short

dresses, long dresses, one- or two-piece dresses, all sharing one feature: not a single dress was cut to cover the breasts. It was astonishing how many ways there were to expose the breasts—lifting them, squeezing them together, pushing them down, leaving them broadly bare, exposing them through slits, circular, oval, or triangular openings, cinching them, framing them in iron, leaving them free directly at the body or aligning them in every conceivable direction before exposing them, and so on. There were also boxes of accessories or jewelry, likely for the nipples or breasts in general—chains, drapes, a vast array of dreamily risqué clothing.

Is there underwear here too?

No. There's no underwear in Peridëis. Nor shoes or hats unless they serve a direct function. It never gets cold, and the sun never beats you down. You get used to going barefoot quickly, trust me. Has it bothered you so far?

No, it hadn't. The stone under Alisha had always felt pleasantly temperate.

Panicking at the overwhelming selection, Alisha grabbed a dress nearby. It was a red fabric dress with floral patterns. She slipped it over her head. With a few cords, it was tightened to her body. As she turned back and forth in front of the mirror and her gaze fell on her breasts, a hot flush ran down her spine. She turned to Tim and said: I'm such a self-centered thing! Don't you need my milk to live here? I'm sorry I didn't think of it—you've been taking care of me this whole time, getting up early, doing all this, and I'm only thinking of myself ... it's all so new ... Do you want some?

She offered Tim, who had taken a seat on one of the stools, her left breast—the one that had always given the most milk. Somehow, that felt important right now.

It's not that bad, Tim brushed it off, but as a gourmet, I'll exploit your guilty conscience for a couple of sips. We'll have time for more later.

Alisha played along, curtsied, and lifted her left breast to his mouth with one hand while pulling him closer with the other. As he sucked, she felt an immediate reaction in her breast, starting at the base under her armpit and shoulder and spreading forward, as if the breast were wringing itself toward the nipple. The flow of milk felt almost like a slight sting. But Tim only sucked until the breasts' immediate supply was depleted, leaving Alisha with the main reserve starting to well up deeper inside.

Thanks, he said simply, letting go, and Alisha was almost disappointed. But how do you like the dress you're wearing?

Alisha turned in front of the mirror. Her areolas and nipples still looked elongated from Tim's strong sucking. — No, this dress isn't quite it, she commented, pulling it off over her head. Tim took it and hung it back neatly.

They walked down the corridor, Alisha trying on dress after dress, until Tim reminded her of the time.

Then I know what I want, Alisha declared, and they returned to a dress she'd

repeatedly examined earlier. It was a long burgundy dress, richly adorned with golden lace and gemstones, with net-like lace from the crotch to the floor in front and back, offering tantalizing glimpses without revealing everything. And, of course, the skirt was cut so the fabric could be easily pushed aside. Tim showed Alisha hooks on the skirt to pin up the fabric if it got in the way. Like if something needed to come out or go in.

Done!, Alisha beamed. This dress and no other!

Stylish, Tim praised. It might drag on the ground a bit when walking, but don't worry about it. It suits you. And to get a new dress, you only need to give a little milk, since nearly all women here are fantastic seamstresses.

You can pay with your milk?

Sure, how else would single women live?

What about working?

They're not allowed to in Peridëis, because it affects the milk, Tim replied. You know the saying: "A cow that plows gives no milk." Here it's: "If the woman pulls a full cart, the man pulls at empty breasts." And there are plenty more proverbs like that. So you go to the market and offer your milk.

And you can just sell it like that?

Yeah. Every single man needs plenty, and so many effects are attributed to breast milk that it's almost mind-boggling. You'll always find a buyer; the question is the price, and that's a matter of time. Payment isn't based on quantity but on time, assuming a woman only produces full-strength milk again after two hours.

Why's that?

Men have observed how long different milks affect them. The most potent milk comes from a woman who hasn't been milked for at least two hours, and a lot of milk isn't better than three drops. Quantity is just a bonus, like a special taste, scent, or color of the milk. If a buyer gets only a little milk from your breast, it's more likely assumed he did something wrong. That's why traders who want to resell lots of milk in small portions are masters of breast erotics, coaxing every last drop from the deepest corners of the breast. But usually, a buyer wants to ensure your milk has strong effects. If you're a stranger, he might hold you for two hours to make sure neither you nor anyone else takes your milk, then milk you. If he knows you and you have a good reputation, he'll trust you—after all, the quality is noticeable later, and if you cheat, your reputation's ruined. A good reputation also determines whether your milk is just run-of-the-mill or something special, like a specific type, vegetarian or full-diet, a particular flavor, which some women go to great lengths for, or the milk of famous women. You, on the other hand, need to be careful, because milk from Peris and visitors, or witches, is the most valuable. Just don't let people notice that right away. Otherwise, branded

milk can fetch a lot more, especially fresh milk not sold in sealed vials[26].
Fresh milk? But how's that done—wouldn't it have to be straight from the breast?
Yes. In some areas, only unmarried women do it directly. Sometimes there's a partition, like the one you saw in the tavern, usually wooden with one or two holes for the breasts. As a woman, you stand on one side and get tied up so the buyer decides when the breast is empty, and you can't pull away early. The buyer's on the other side. He has the right to completely empty the breasts at his discretion. Ideally, the milk-giving woman and the milk buyer neither see nor hear each other, so he doesn't know whose milk he's drinking, and she doesn't know who's drinking her milk. Often, in dairies, the women's entrance is at the back and the men's at the front, or otherwise arranged so they can't recognize each other. Up front sits the milk broker who owns the market stall. He keeps watch, handles the money, and, if reputable, doesn't take just any woman but pays better and charges buyers more. Milk brokers are often true connoisseurs, able to distinguish quality from inferior goods. But you'll also find women in many other places freely offering their milk, maybe with a box or board with two holes for formality, or just themselves. In that case, buying is purely a matter of trust. If she looks honest, you pay a decent price as a man; if not, you haggle. For small things, you can offer your milk for a symbolic price—like a few squirts fresh from the breast for a sausage at the market, a bouquet of flowers, or the little trinkets people make and sell for fun. It shows the item has value to you. Prices and customs vary everywhere, though. But one thing you can't do as a woman: work. Someone would quickly show up, lecturing you about indecency, how it's unbecoming for a woman to abuse her body for menial tasks, how it affects the milk, and other stuff like that. As a man ... well, you beg, do some work, or play the stud.
Play the stud?
You know, if the woman's in the mood ...
Ah! Alisha fell silent, impressed, needing to process it all. Then it hit her that she could finally put on her stylish dress. Tim helped her.
You look stunning in it, he murmured.
Alisha twirled in front of the mirror, pleased with herself. She wasn't entirely sure about the breasts, though, as the underbust part of the dress was cut to make them point slightly downward. She tugged at them to see if it could be adjusted, but Tim grabbed her hand: Leave it. It looks perfect, trust me—men are the better experts at judging the visual impact of breasts.

26 In China, until the 1940s, breastmilk was sold in markets for adult men, especially for healing and strengthening purposes. A cup of breast milk, freshly expressed before the buyer for verification, could fetch about the daily wage of an unskilled laborer (e.g., a porter). Other milk was generally not traded in China. Some families lived solely off this breastmilk trade until Mao Zedong banned it, seeing it as a stark symbol of poverty.

Alisha, glancing downward, saw he wasn't lying. Not a full erection, but swollen and slightly raised. Good!, she said, Done! We can go. Tell me, do all these stylish things grow on trees too?
No, Tim replied, only in raw form. You could wear them as is, but they lack the embellishments. For many women here, designing clothes as elaborately as possible is a serious hobby—the only work they're allowed, besides cooking, trading, and creative stuff. Light tasks that aren't strenuous. Dresses are often practically thrown at you, and the sellers are proud if you leave an old dress behind and walk out in their handmade one. But finding raw materials in the wild is another thing, a mix of hobby and work. Sometimes you search weeks for a forest with *the* perfect dresses for your design idea. Same with everyday items—it's one thing that they grow ready-made on trees, another to find them and maybe spruce them up. Here in this tavern, people kindly leave good stuff for newcomers so you have something to start with. We'll leave yesterday's dress here; that's fine. Taking it would be too much, and it's not necessary.
Hmm.
No arguments, we don't have a moving truck, and you barely need to bring anything on a trip here.
Hmm.
Otherwise, hardly anyone comes to this tavern anymore.
Why not?, asked Alisha.
Because no visitors use the passage we came through anymore. It's been betrayed, damaged, and contaminated outside. It's only used for first-time visitors now. Otherwise, we'd have met plenty of people. But wait, you'll see other passage points and meet other visitors. Their stories alone are worth the visit. But first, you need to experience Peridëis yourself. You'll love it, and how...
Puff!, went one torch, extinguishing. Puff! Alisha's torch went out too.
Damn, said Tim, I was just thinking about that. Lean against the wall until our eyes adjust to the dark.
Both leaned silently against the wall with their backs. Alisha heard Tim's breathing and lost herself in thought. What a fantastical world...
After a while, Alisha thought she could make out the room's outlines again, then a bit more, and more still. After maybe ten minutes, she could navigate confidently. The room was bathed in a dim green light—coming from the walls, as the clothes and objects remained dark.
Where's the light coming from?, Alisha whispered.
Speak normally, Tim replied. The light comes straight from the rocks. Some rocks glow in other colors. Looks great, doesn't it?
A few moments later, Tim took Alisha's hand and led her through the corridors to the outside. With no objects cluttering the corridors, the outlines of the passages and doors to other underground rooms stood out vividly, especially since some

rock layers glowed brighter and others darker, creating striking patterns. But you still had to walk carefully, as the glow was faint.

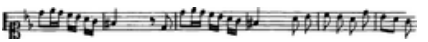
Finally, they were back upstairs in the tavern, and Alisha blinked, dazzled, through the window arches at the stunning landscape spread out before them.
The mirror's at the far end of the room, Tim said from behind.
Oh, right! — Alisha headed over and, reaching the mirror, studied her dress closely. It was still just as beautiful, with the embedded gemstones and gold threads gleaming joyfully in the sunlight. Only now did she notice how elegantly her exposed breasts were framed by a soft border of floral ornaments, as if they were the dress's greatest treasure, meant to be highlighted.
Tim gave her plenty of time to admire herself.
And all women here really bare their breasts?, she asked, turning back and forth.
All of them, Tim confirmed. Does it bother you?
On the contrary, Alisha growled. Doesn't bother you men either, does it?
Never.
Alisha giggled. Nice that our feminine efforts are appreciated.
Sounds different sometimes.
Hypocrisy. Tell a woman convincingly she doesn't interest you sexually, and she'll get mad.
Speaking of which, Tim said slowly, grabbing Alisha firmly by the shoulders from behind. Enough looking, it's time I milk you.
True. Where do you want to do it?
Two floors up. Nowhere's it done more stylishly than in these taverns, Tim replied. They've got a thousand and one devices for a thousand and one ways to milk a woman. Come on!
Alisha followed Tim up the stairs.
In the milking room, Tim pointed to a relatively simple upright wooden slat frame with arm and leg straps. He guided Alisha to it, pulled her breasts through two slats to the other side, and strapped her arms and legs in. Alisha felt a strangely pleasant anticipation; even the binding, given her boundless trust in Tim, was a deeply enjoyable process, and being bound felt like a delightful state. Tim now tilted the frame forward slowly, grabbed a cup, and sat on a stool in front of Alisha. Attached to the frame was an adjustable board, which Tim positioned so Alisha's breasts hung directly over it. Alisha could observe it well in her current head position. Tim placed the milking cup under her right breast and began gently massaging it with both hands to prepare it. Alisha purred and closed her eyes. Fingers delicately probed the structures of her right breast, massaging, loosening, shaking it, and finally coaxing out the milk. Alisha felt her breasts contract, goosebumps rising, and then, steadily increasing, milk flowed through her nipples, eventually squirting in rhythm with the milking motions. A unique

rhythm—slow, steady, demanding, with firm, strong pulls. The left breast, then the right again, switching a few times, massaging the glandular tissue in between to empty the deepest corners ... until Tim said: Empty!, and unstrapped Alisha. Look how much milk you gave.
Alisha looked. Astonishing, what was possible in such a short time.
You ... um ..., Alisha hesitated, I've earned a reward, haven't I?
You have! What were you thinking of?
You promised me something yesterday ... in the room downstairs.
The playroom.
Yes.
Come on. I'll do it. But first, I'll take my reward.
He said it and drank Alisha's breastmilk.
Alisha cheered. Moments later, she laughed loudly. No one back home must know I'm begging a man to spank me and cheering when he does. You'll do it gently, right?
Gently? Not sure yet.
Really?
No way you're giving me stage directions. Then you stay unspanked. You'll have to trust me.
Hmm.
Well?
Hmm. But you won't overdo it?
No. I can't rape you, unfortunately.
Alisha laughed. But the spanking. You won't overdo that either?
Won't tell you.
Oddly, Alisha saw no reason not to go to the playroom. She willingly let herself be draped over a large wooden trestle, where Tim bound her hands and feet and flipped her dress back to bare her bottom. She just did it. It was arousing. Very arousing. He hadn't promised her anything. All that was certain was that in a few moments, she'd be disciplined by a man. Spanked. He'd give her a thrashing.
Please spank me, Alisha whispered. Then she closed her eyes in nervous but highly aroused anticipation.
I'll use my open hand, said Tim.
Yes, Alisha breathed.
A tiny moment passed.
Smack!, Tim's hand hissed onto Alisha's bare bottom.
Fffffff, Alisha gasped. Her bottom burned.
But Alisha held still.
Smack!, Tim's hand struck her bare bottom again. It stung sharply—Tim hadn't held back.
It happened three times in total.

Now Tim asked: Can you take more?
Yes!, Alisha said without hesitation. Will you spank me a full ten times? Will you *please* spank me a full ten times? Even if I say no in between?
Smack!
Smack!
Again and again, his hand struck Alisha's bottom, burning fiercely. Yet Alisha didn't ask him to stop. She pressed herself into the trestle, receiving the stinging, burning slaps one after another in a frenzied state of arousal, yet as a single experience. Only when all ten strikes were delivered did Alisha, tears streaming from her eyes, plead: I'd like to pleasure myself. *Please.*
Tim quickly untied her from the trestle, briefly massaged her wrists, which bore rope marks, gently but swiftly wiped the tears from her face with his fingers, and carried her to a couch. There, he laid her down, flipped back her skirt, placed her hands in her lap, its triangle slick with arousal, and sat on a stool beside her, resting his elbows comfortably on the couch and his chin on his hands. He watched as Alisha's thighs spread wide, her middle finger immediately finding her sensitive spot and vibrating, while two fingers of her left hand held the entrance open. Alisha turned her head toward Tim, staring half-absently with glassy eyes at the image: the desired, unattainable man, clothed but with his penis exposed, barefoot, the man she gave milk to so he could live, who protected her, and who had just disciplined her. Then she came in a slow, very slow, warm wave that carried her long on its peak before gradually subsiding.
Rest a moment, Tim said, touching her shoulder briefly. I'll be right back.
Alisha dreamed with open eyes, slowly coming back to herself. Her bottom burned, and it felt surprisingly good.
Humans are strange, Alisha thought. Tens of thousands of years of human development, and still so much animal inside. And we deny it. No, I don't have to, she thought. Not here, anyway. My dress is cut so I can reach myself. Or others can reach me. Everyone here wears such dresses and gets satisfaction whenever they want, however they want. What a world... Why is it such a problem in the rest of the world ... the other world? Bonobo apes don't have an issue with it, and they're our closest relatives[27].
Gradually, Alisha came back to herself, feeling fresh and rested. Just as she sat up, Tim returned. He had a medium-sized leather backpack and a smaller one, apparently for Alisha.
Some provisions and other things we'll need on the way, Tim said, patting the larger backpack.
I thought everything grows on trees here? Why the hassle?
You usually find water, since nearly every valley has a stream, Tim replied, but

27 By the way: Bonobos regulate social relations through sexuality, though their average copulation duration is only about 13 seconds.

not all plants grow everywhere. So we need something to carry the food we find.
That made sense.
Come on, Tim said, it's time to head out.
And who cleans up?, Alisha asked.
Tim winked: There's staff for that.
So that's why the other dress could just stay downstairs. Alisha had no objections. They descended the stairs to the main hall, and Alisha almost regretted leaving the beautiful place with its dreamy view. But her curiosity about Peridëis won out. So they climbed down the grand outdoor staircase from the rock tavern into the valley. With her bottom still burning.



The Azure Paved Path

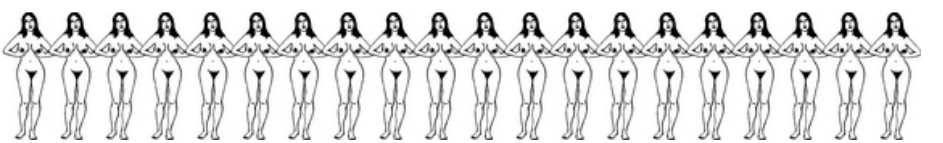
When Alisha and Tim had descended from the tavern and reached the valley below, they walked side by side, he with the large supply backpack, she with her tiny backpack that barely disrupted the aesthetics of her dress. The air brushed pleasantly between her legs, making it noticeable that the skirt of her dress was open in the middle, front and back, with lace trim, and her breasts bounced in rhythm with her steps. Alisha had once read that women in some African tribes wore a cord horizontally around their shoulders and upper breasts for this very reason. Not because the bouncing was bothersome, but because, as the women put it, "bouncing breasts drive men crazy." Here, though, that didn't seem to be a problem at all ... or perhaps it was part of the solution. What a world. A wave of euphoria swept over Alisha. Before her lay paradise, holding adventure tailored just for her, secrets, and plenty of fun, unhindered by hypocritical false morals.

Then Alisha saw a path between the trees ahead, paved with glossy blue bricks and bordered on both sides by strips of yellow bricks.
That's the path we'll take!, said Tim. It's the azure paved path.
My butt's burning, said Alisha.
Tim laughed.
Tell me—how did it feel for you?, asked Alisha.
Strangely arousing.
You don't want to talk about it?
I do, sure. But I think I need some time first.
Didn't you enjoy it?
I did. That's exactly the problem.
Why a problem if *I* enjoyed it?
Because my whole life, I was taught that a man isn't supposed to. And now I've

realized it really turns me on.
So that's what's going on, Alisha said thoughtfully. But, she mused aloud, women aren't allowed to just spread their legs when they feel like it. In some parts of the world, you'd even be killed for it as a woman. Does that help?
Your comparison has something to it, said Tim. In an era of effective contraception, though, you have to wonder why this norm still exists. In other parts of the world or in the past, fine, an unmarried pregnancy could ruin a woman's life. But with us? Today? It shouldn't matter, as long as she's free and unattached. Let me spin this further. At least where we are, it's not an issue that women and men have equal rights. Under those circumstances, shouldn't it be irrelevant if a woman chooses not to want those rights? Or vice versa. If it goes wrong, the couple can split, or even simpler, you take your rights back. Is there a flaw in that logic?
That real life often isn't quite so simple, said Alisha, adding: I don't want to spout nonsense just to gain advantages.
As for real life, said Tim, we're here in Peridëis, where dreams come true. But there's still something to it. Though the same applies to spreading your legs. Unwanted pregnancies, diseases, stupid people, who knows.
But that applies here too: We're in Peridëis, where dreams come true, Alisha laughed. Here, I can spread my thighs whenever I want without worry?
Of course. Like in a dream, like reading a book or watching a movie.
Then you can also, without worry, overpower me, tie me up, whip me?
I notice you tactfully left out rape.
Alisha laughed.
How did it actually feel?, asked Tim.
It hurt, said Alisha. Still, it was intensely arousing. But I felt the same with the tying up. I had thoughts that went much further, but I need to come to terms with those depths of *my* soul first. It's possible that, at the right moment, it could build up to a climax for me. Would you do it again for me?
Give me some time.
Alright, change of topic!, said Alisha. Tell me, what's next, and what's here? Why am I here? Me and no one else?
We're heading to the Red Rose City, where you'll formally present yourself to one of the Peris, Tim replied, and she'll tell you. Beyond that, you bring yourself into it—you enrich Peridëis by being here. And not just a little, or the Peris would never have brought you here.
Me?, Alisha asked, confused. — What's so special about me?
Apparently, there is something special about you, Tim answered. Something that's just there. I don't have orders for you to do anything specific. I'm just showing you the land, and at some point, we'll arrive in the Red Rose City. In between, there's a lot I don't know myself. I promise you a truly wonderful

vacation. Let's see what happens!
And then?
And then? — Well, you could go back home in between, return here, go back home, come back, and so on. I'll take you to another tavern for that. Near it, there's another passage to the other world. And guess where it leads?
Where?
Straight home, no detour by plane.
No way. Then we could've taken an easier route here.
We could have. Theoretically.
Let's see what happens, Alisha laughed, and they set off along the azure paved path, eager for what lay ahead.

The azure paved path wound through a long valley between dizzyingly high yellow-red cliffs. Sometimes the valley was wider, sometimes narrower, and occasionally another valley joined it. But they followed the azure paved path. A clear stream accompanied them, occasionally forming tiny lakes perfect for swimming. Sometimes another stream flowed in, sometimes the stream split to supply water to a branching valley. Flower-covered meadows alternated with impenetrable jungle, just barely allowing the path through.
For overnight stays, Tim chose one of the many small or large caves found in the high cliffs. They could have slept outside, as it was always warm enough, but just before sunrise, it sometimes rained. Tim explained to Alisha that it almost exclusively rained at night because the air cooled slightly higher up, while down here between the cliffs, the ground still radiated enough daytime warmth at night. But higher up, the cooling was enough to condense evaporated water into droplets that fell back down. The necessary low temperature was reached just before sunrise. The rain warmed up on its way down, arriving as warm summer rain. If caught by it, you could simply strip naked to keep your clothes dry, and when the rain stopped after no more than half an hour, you put your clothes back on. That simple.



Institute for Special Physics (Object P)

Scouts on Duty[28]

The entrance gate to Object P bore a sign reading "Institute for Special Physics." Behind it, set back slightly, was a small former forester's house with a garden, surrounded by its own fence and hedge. This had been kept less for security reasons and more because, for secrecy, unauthorized persons were not to be brought into the institute's building. The garden was bleak and uninspired but meticulously maintained. The interior of the former forester's house was new, spotlessly clean, and barely worn, but tasteless, an impression heightened by the neon tube lighting. Decorative elements were entirely absent. The windows were fitted with bars and covered with thick curtains. Inside was a sort of living room with a wall unit, carpet, television, and the like, next to it a kind of study with a seating area and desk, a small kitchen, a bathroom, an empty armory, and two bedrooms. There were no secrets to be found, except for a listening device in the study, but even that consisted only of two microphones embedded under the wallpaper, with wires leading to a telephone socket in the corner. A tape recorder could be connected there if needed. None was currently attached; the device was brought in when required.

In the study, Stasi Captain Prillwitz sat in his field service uniform, nervously drumming his fingers on the table and chain-smoking cigarettes. The ashtray was overflowing. His superior had contributed to the mess, having briefed him an hour earlier for the upcoming mission. The issue was that, as a handling officer, Captain Prillwitz always had to be present before his subordinate operative arrived. Always. There was no debating it—regulations were regulations. He had checked the room and the house countless times already; everything was done, and there was nothing left to do. His IM, or Unofficial Collaborator, was new, which made things so taxing. The new man was a film actor by profession. Such people called themselves "collaborators," but in reality, they weren't part of the firm and were meant to provide information rather than receive it. That was the principle. That way, they couldn't reveal anything, accidentally or intentionally, and they played their assigned roles better. You had to coddle them a bit, wrap them in cotton, praise them nicely, and then they'd do the miraculous things you couldn't or weren't allowed to do yourself.

28 Scout: In public Stasi jargon, their own spies/agents/informants/investigators were called Kundschafter des Friedens = scouts of peace, internally IM = Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter.

There! — Outside, the distinctive two-stroke roar of a Wartburg limousine[29] could be heard. That had to be him. Captain Prillwitz hurriedly stubbed out his cigarette, rushed to the window, and flung it open. The fresh air rushing in was almost intoxicating; he should have aired out earlier. The Wartburg was being checked at the entrance barrier, and Captain Prillwitz could already hear, further back, the Trabant bringing his superior back to the front.
As agreed, the superior had intercepted the new IM[30] at the gate and was bringing him to the forester's house. The window was still open for airing, and Captain Prillwitz quickly cleaned the desk of cigarette ash. Then he checked the kitchen for the coffee, long since prepared, and the cake he had bought that morning at the bakery in the nearby small town. They wanted to make a good impression on the new IM, after all, since he wasn't doing this for money, and you couldn't skimp on hospitality. The cigarette stench was fortunately dissipating somewhat. Now the front door rattled, and Captain Prillwitz heard his superior's unusually cheerful voice, even a laugh from him.
Come in!, he called. No formal 'sir' or anything like that - the IMs were usually addressed in a more chummy way to create a feeling of camaraderie.
Captain Prillwitz now went to the door. Hello!, he greeted the IM, the actor, shaking his hand with a cheerful laugh, I'm Udo. His sweaty palm probably betrayed his nervousness. I'm Steffen, the IM replied, which Captain Prillwitz, of course, already knew.
Sit down, boomed his superior without giving his own name, plopping into an armchair. Captain Prillwitz briefly disappeared into the kitchen and returned with coffee and cake. He noticed they shouldn't have cheaped out on the dishes—it was the cheapest canteen porcelain, bearing traces of prior use. And the cutlery was aluminum; they could afford something better. Oh well, too late to change now.
But fortunately, the cake was decent and generously portioned.
While they celebrated coffee time and chatted about trivial matters, Captain Prillwitz discreetly observed IM Steffen. Damn, not your average Joe—fairly tall but not overly so, nickel-framed glasses, long medium-blond hair, black clothes with a noticeable style (Western stuff?), he wouldn't stand out everywhere. Where did they find these people? But he'd have to check if IM Steffen was truly

29 Wartburg: Two brands of passenger car were produced in the GDR: Wartburg and Trabant, both with 2-cycle Otto engines and a distinctive engine sound. The Wartburg was regarded as a robust and quite comfortable car, while there was a joke that the Trabant was the quietest car in the world because it was so cramped that you could cover your ears with your knees.

30 IM: Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter = Inofficial employee. These were the underground agents of the Stasi, whose work for the Stasi was only allowed to be known to very few official employees. Even in the secret Stasi files, they were only referred to by their code names. Most of them worked for the Stasi out of conviction and were not paid for it.

loyal to the Party's principles. With someone wearing Western clothes, especially an artist type, you never knew.
The superior slowly got to the point, and Captain Prillwitz grew more attentive. He introduced him again. By first name, Udo, as was customary; last names weren't mentioned, nor was one's rank, as if it didn't exist, even when wearing a field service uniform. The superior forgot to mention his own name again.
Now it was his turn. The superior stood up and said goodbye. Captain Prillwitz dutifully escorted him to the door. When he closed it and turned around, he met the curious eyes of the IM. Intelligent eyes, thought Captain Prillwitz, hoping this guy wouldn't outsmart him. He approached the IM, genuinely relieved his superior was gone, and introduced himself again: Alright, let's do this properly— I'm Udo! — Steffen! They shook hands again and laughed. The atmosphere was noticeably more relaxed now. Captain Prillwitz sank back into his armchair.
With a much firmer voice than in his superior's presence, he asked: So! Any idea what this is about?
None at all.
Really? Absolutely none?
No, nothing. I only know it's supposed to involve acting skills, especially immersing myself in completely foreign mindsets. And that I can't tell anyone anything.
Then you're in for a surprise, said Captain Prillwitz, relishing the chance to tell his story, as he had something to offer: What I can offer you, he said to IM Steffen, puts every theater and every movie far in the shade, and that's an understatement. ... But first, more coffee.
In the kitchen, Captain Prillwitz thought again about how to start. Best not to tell too much—just show first, then describe.
Listen, he said when the coffee refill was on the table, I'll show you the tales of One Thousand and One Nights, but I'll really show them to you; that's better than any description.
Captain Prillwitz picked up the phone, dialed a two-digit number, and spoke into the receiver: We're heading into the Zone in fifteen minutes, everything clear on your end? — He nodded, as if his counterpart could see him, and slammed the receiver down. Then he reached for his desk, where a brand-new, neatly folded field service uniform and a packet of underwear lay. He grabbed the uniform and, at the same time, reached under the table for a pair of new field service boots. He placed it all on the coffee table, boots included. They were new, so no need to be overly fussy.
Alright, he said, put this stuff on. Leave your civilian clothes here in the house— underwear, socks, jewelry, watch, papers, everything. Just leave it on the sofa; no one will come in or take anything in the meantime. Cigarettes stay here too; you'll get some from us instead...

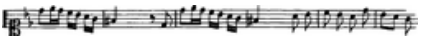
IM Steffen whistled: Duett brand! I'll gladly leave mine here.
Captain Prillwitz didn't acknowledge the joke: This is really important—you can't take anything with you, and what you're given has to stay here afterward. Lockout principle, got it? That's why you need to change completely. As I said, everything, including socks and underwear. I need to pop into the kitchen anyway.
Doesn't matter, grumbled IM Steffen, you can stay here; actors change all the time, no need to make a big fuss every time.
I actually need to grab something from the fridge, Captain Prillwitz grinned.

IM Steffen began undressing, tossing his civilian clothes carelessly onto the sofa. In between, he took a sip of coffee. This one was much better than the first. The earlier coffee had probably been sitting in the machine forever. Rat poison, absolutely awful. Before taking off his underwear, he checked if there was a pair in the uniform stack. There was. Though it was one of those long white ones, the passion-killer type. Oh well, no big deal—it wasn't a dance. So he shed his own underwear, put on the passion-killer, and then the rest. The field uniform fit perfectly; they seemed well-informed. After buckling the belt, IM Steffen noticed the field uniform lacked the usual rank insignia. He'd remain a civilian in military disguise, as he was.
Looking sharp, commented Captain Prillwitz, adding: By the way, it doesn't mean anything that it's a field service uniform; work clothes would've done too, but we've got tons of this stuff lying around, and it's better than anything else in the field. We're heading ... out soon. Oh, and drink this, he added, pointing to two cups he'd placed on the desk.
What's that?
Well, let's call it a serum, Captain Prillwitz didn't hesitate for a moment, we both have to drink it, or we can't do our job, says the doctor.
And what is it, and what's it for or against?
It's not harmful and doesn't even taste bad, Captain Prillwitz dodged. Milk with something in it.
To prove it, Captain Prillwitz took one of the cups and downed it in one gulp. Come on, he urged IM Steffen, your turn!
IM Steffen noticed his question had gone unanswered but took the offered cup and looked inside. Not white, but slightly beige. He sipped it with his lips. It smelled like milk and tasted like vanilla milk. He braced himself and drank the whole cup. It was just normal cool milk with a hint of vanilla, slightly sweetened. And creamier. Maybe straight from a farm—the quality was noticeably higher than usual. If all medicine tasted like this, the world would be a better place, he decided, licking his lips. They probably wouldn't give him anything questionable, he thought. On the other hand, he was uneasy about taking an unknown drug

without necessity, especially given the rumors about muscle-bound top female athletes with gladiator builds and deep voices.
There's another dose later, Captain Prillwitz added, to make matters worse. Then he followed up: And now we're off.
That last sentence flipped a switch for IM Steffen. Who cares what was in the milk, he pushed his concerns aside; he was chosen to be part of a secret. And apparently, he alone was capable of achieving certain things they couldn't manage themselves. If you wanted to do extraordinary things, you had to accept certain risks. Only death was free, and it cost your life. So let's go.

Outside, the Wartburg's engine could be heard again. The two left the house, Captain Prillwitz carrying two light field-gray backpacks.
The driver was also an officer, a major, so one rank above Captain Prillwitz. He greeted IM Steffen with a handshake. To IM Steffen, he seemed more pleasant than Captain Prillwitz—not as stiff, not as tense. But who knows, maybe Captain Prillwitz was just nervous, which would be understandable.
Off to the adventure, said the major, I'll drive you the short distance to the gate.
They drove on a concrete slab road through the pine forest that crisscrossed the area. About every 20 meters, they passed a lamppost, and after maybe 300 meters, the road branched left toward the service building. But they continued straight ahead. The drive didn't take long and ended at a fenced gate secured with a chain and padlock, next to which was an olive-green intercom accessible from both sides. Ten meters beyond the gate, the concrete road ended. To the left and right of the gate were olive-green metal boxes, possibly part of an electronic security system, but they could just as well be anything else. A weatherproof, swiveling camera was mounted on a pole. Beyond the fence was only loose mixed forest with plenty of underbrush, shrubs, occasional patches of forest grass or sand, but nothing else. No path, no lighting, no technology.
They got out of the Wartburg, and the major went to the intercom:
Two persons passing through to the Zone!
Understood, two persons, came the tinny reply.
The major unlocked the gate with a key attached to his uniform jacket by a cord. He opened it about a meter, just enough for Captain Prillwitz and IM Steffen to pass through comfortably. In you go, and good luck! — And you, he looked at Captain Prillwitz, take good care and don't get cocky, got it?
Got it, grumbled Captain Prillwitz, if I get one more lecture, I'll start singing them out loud.
Alright, alright, the other officer replied, patting Captain Prillwitz on the shoulder and shaking IM Steffen's hand.
Off you go, both of you, no rush—you've got the whole day.
As Captain Prillwitz and IM Steffen disappeared into the Zone, the major

carefully locked the gate, watched them for a long time, and then spoke into the intercom:
Two persons have entered the Zone.
Understood, two persons in the Zone, came the tinny reply.
The major looked through the fence into the Zone for a long time, lighting a cigarette. His hands were trembling. He was afraid of the Zone. It was eerie, and he'd rather be anywhere else. But he couldn't show it.
When he finished smoking, he carefully stamped out the butt on the concrete, got back into the Wartburg, turned around, and drove back to the service building.



The Zone

He's just jealous because he can't come in here, growled Captain Prillwitz. Alright, now we're definitely getting started. He handed IM Steffen one of the two backpacks. Put it on! It's got provisions and various things we'll need later. He slung the other backpack over his own shoulder.
IM Steffen followed suit and found the backpack comfortable, especially since the shoulder straps were equipped with a chest strap that ensured a good fit.
Captain Prillwitz headed toward the underbrush directly in front of them and commented: Over there between the trees, a kind of path starts. Stay behind me, I'll explain the rest later.
They set off. Reaching the trees, Captain Prillwitz pushed the branches aside and slipped through a gap. The branches snapped back and hit IM Steffen in the face.
You've got to watch out yourself, muttered Captain Prillwitz. You know, later I can't keep looking back. Best to stay about three meters behind me, that works best. IM Steffen did as he was told, and indeed, it made it easier to focus on the path.
The narrow, barely discernible path wound through the trees. To be precise, there was nothing visible on the ground; only the gap in the wild growth of plants suggested that this path was used regularly.
After a few minutes, they stopped. A small clearing lay ahead.
From here, we need to be careful, Captain Prillwitz explained to IM Steffen. You see, this is where the actual Zone begins. Look at the ground. You can see the grass here is still normal, but from that line there (he pointed ahead), it looks strange and feels strange too. Come with me.
They walked to the indicated spot. And indeed: along a sharply defined line, the grass on their side was normal, but on the Zone's side, it had a peculiar appearance. The color seemed drained, everything looked a shade grayer, but a glaring gray, and the grass appeared artificial. At the boundary line, it looked like a crack ran through the ground.

Everything beyond is dead, commented Captain Prillwitz. Nothing lives in the Zone. The strange thing is, you only notice it when you're up close. From a distance, with a telephoto lens, it looks completely normal. But in here: You can force animals inside, but they flee immediately. Even the best dogs outright refuse commands. If you bring plants in, after a while, they turn like this stuff here, as if made of plastic. They don't seem to die exactly, but they stop growing. Take them out, and they crumble to dust in your hands, like they're dried out. But oddly, not inside the Zone. There, they don't change. But here's the kicker: If you break or cut them, only then do they suddenly start growing again. And they grow until they've exactly restored their original state, without the slightest change!

Captain Prillwitz set his backpack on the ground and pulled out a pair of black rubber gloves. Alright, he said, you've got some in yours too—one pair for the way in, one for the way back, and five more for free use. We're putting on the gloves now.

IM Steffen also set down his backpack and opened it. Sure enough, it contained two pairs of gloves, plus another backpack and a folded plastic bag.

There are also two clothing packets, provisions, three full water canteens, and other things in there, commented Captain Prillwitz. But leave those for now.

IM Steffen took out a pair of black rubber gloves, put the backpack back on, and pulled on the gloves, just as Captain Prillwitz had already done.

What in heaven's name is this place?, asked IM Steffen.

You mustn't tell anyone about it, replied Captain Prillwitz. Absolutely no one. Right now, we don't really know what this is either. A phenomenon that needs to be investigated before someone else beats us to it. And maybe finds things that could seriously harm us, got it? As for yourself, I can reassure you—no known radiation has been detected. Though inside the Zone, all measuring instruments fail. There's no poison here either. We're regularly examined by specialists, and nothing has been found. Even that, uh, serum is only for later. You'll see. This wasn't a technical accident, and it's not something we created. Not even the Nazis before '45—this has to be older. There are some old legends about evil spirits living here; people avoided the area, and no one wanted it. The Nazis sealed it off, and Göring himself is said to have been here. But apparently, they did nothing else, just sealed it. Shortly before the war ended, there was a massive explosion here, according to local reports. But no one came to check, at least not that we know of. They were all scared of poison or something else and figured if there was an explosion, everything was destroyed anyway. About three months after the war, there were several deaths among people not from this area. After that, locals threatened their kids with a thrashing if they even set foot near this place. They seem to have stuck to it, as we know of no further deaths afterward. No records about the Zone were found. Nothing. We had to start from scratch. The

friends[31] were here briefly after the war but didn't investigate further or take an interest. There was nothing much here, after all. Only later did some strange reports draw our attention to the Zone, about newer accidents that seemed implausible until we thought there might still be something left from the Nazis. At first, we suspected chemicals, maybe poison gas, or a secret research facility. After fatal accidents during official explorations, things went quiet for a few years, and they just replaced the perimeter fence and put up signs. "Contaminated Munitions Area" and "Life-Threatening Danger." People believed it back then. Well, eventually, a sharper mind took a closer look at the records, and the Zone became a matter for the MfS[32].

But if there were deaths...?, IM Steffen was a bit uneasy.

Manageable!, Captain Prillwitz replied firmly, seeming genuinely convinced, which reassured IM Steffen. Manageable!, he repeated. Experts are amazed, amateurs are baffled. You have to explore things carefully, identify dangers, and establish rules that you follow with discipline. Then the danger is no longer a danger. We know the hazard points by now, and I've been through here dozens of times. If it helps: I'm a trained lone operative.

IM Steffen had no doubt about that. Captain Prillwitz now seemed like a coiled spring. Where he had appeared aloof and tense outside, the prototypical Stasi man you could spot a mile away in the dark, here he came across as an ironclad, supremely capable fighter. He seemed to feel at home here too. That reassured IM Steffen immensely.

Just do what I tell you, said Captain Prillwitz in a friendly tone. That's all you need to do. I know the explored parts of the Zone like the back of my hand, I know the route, I know the dangers, I know how to behave where and when. Stay behind me, listen to me, do exactly what I say. Then there won't be any problems. There were only deaths here at the beginning when we didn't know what was going on. And where we still don't know what's going on, we don't go. There was one exception two years ago, Captain Prillwitz suddenly changed his tone. Some idiot climbed over the fence illegally, despite the restricted area signs. Some nutcase. Got himself killed, I can tell you. (Captain Prillwitz laughed.) No one dared to retrieve him afterward because we didn't know enough about that part of the Zone. Better that way. Someone else might have gotten hit, and it wouldn't have helped the idiot anyway. We found out who he was another way, so it wasn't worth the risk.

Is he still lying there?, asked IM Steffen.

Don't know, replied Captain Prillwitz. We only know about him because a guard

31 "Friends": Common Stasi term for Soviet authorities.

32 MfS = Ministerium für Staatssicherheit = Ministry for State Security = Stasi. Within the MfS, the word "Stasi" was considered derogatory and typically avoided. Only regular guard soldiers used it with a mocking undertone.

outside the Zone caught him, but the guy fled into the Zone. The guards have a strict no-entry order. So we got a report from them, and some of our people went along the fence inside. Not deep into the actual Zone—no one's that stupid. After a while, they saw a flash of light, and everyone knew what had happened. We lay in the terrain for a few days just to be sure, to see if he was still alive. That was a shitty job, but no one expected anything, and he never came back. No one went to check, of course, but the case was crystal clear. That's what happens when you don't listen and can't read signs.

Alright, Captain Prillwitz concluded, let's go. Don't touch anything, stay right behind me, and nothing will happen to you. And if an atomic bomb goes off, you better look, because you only see that once in a lifetime.

Captain Prillwitz set off toward the inner Zone.

IM Steffen followed. His earlier reassurance was gone. A concrete dead body was different from an abstract danger. And that stupid atomic bomb joke was, first, cliché, and second, the word "atomic bomb" stirred mixed feelings in IM Steffen. He had served in the army[33], extended his conscription semi-voluntarily to three years, and in the armee, he had grown to hate that topic. That feeling of horrific, truly existential threat—not the barracks drill. He had managed the regular drill by learning how to dodge unpleasant tasks as much as possible. You could've skipped that dumb atomic bomb joke, IM Steffen thought to himself. But he said nothing.

They both walked onto the small clearing and crossed the boundary into the actual Zone in the middle. The sun suddenly blazed mercilessly, though the sky was overcast. All colors around them faded, and the landscape appeared almost gray. The suddenly dry grass crumbled to dust under their feet, only to regrow moments later. Where clear footprints had formed behind them, they vanished one by one as if by a ghost's hand until all were gone. When Captain Prillwitz and IM Steffen paused once, it looked like someone was following them, as the footprints disappeared step by step.

Creepy, said IM Steffen. Like there are ghosts here.

Some phenomenon, replied Captain Prillwitz, nothing more.

And on they went. IM Steffen felt the urge to stay close to Captain Prillwitz. Whatever else he might be, he seemed to master his field with sleepwalker-like certainty. And IM Steffen needed that certainty right now. Only with effort did he force himself to maintain a three-meter distance from Captain Prillwitz.

They pushed through the underbrush. Touch branches only with gloves.

They moved in a crouch as an invisible fire glowed above them.

They jumped over a ditch filled with a strangely liquid, swirling substance.

They passed through an area of dead silence where even their own breathing was

33 In the GDR, military service was obligatory for men.

inaudible.
They suddenly saw everything upside down, and moments later, it was over just as abruptly.
They saw a large, brightly colored flower floating in the air.
They avoided a peculiar swirling mist.
They threw handfuls of sand into the trembling air ahead to detect and dodge a strangely brutal force.
And the sun blazed mercilessly, though the sky was overcast.
Sweat ran down their faces and into their eyes. Don't wipe it! Never! Just blow!
Their hands sweated in the rubber gloves.
Their clothes clung to their bodies.
Their throats were parched. Drink only later!
And the fear. In IM Steffen.
Yet focus and almost cheerful confidence in Captain Prillwitz.
Then, suddenly, they stood before a small hill covered with shrubs and small birches, if you could still call them birches and shrubs here. Even Captain Prillwitz was out of breath, despite his almost unbelievable toughness.
IM Steffen saw remnants of a long-decayed building protruding from the hill, a fieldstone base below and bricks above. Not much was left, but there was still a cellar staircase. And that's where Captain Prillwitz headed.
We're here, said Captain Prillwitz, laughing heartily. Don't wipe your face, he added.
Thanks, replied IM Steffen. Finally!, he added, I can barely keep up, and I stopped understanding anything ages ago.
You made it, said Captain Prillwitz cheerfully.
It was astonishing. Captain Prillwitz seemed like a different person. His tension was completely gone. IM Steffen would almost say Captain Prillwitz looked ... yes ... happy. Truly happy. Almost euphoric. Strange. Why?
Come on, said Captain Prillwitz, down the stairs in that ruin. We'll take a break down there first.
And Captain Prillwitz led the way again.
They descended the half-destroyed staircase. Concrete. Below, a shattered steel door hung crookedly on its hinges. A dilapidated concrete corridor opened up, the ceiling half-collapsed, and daylight streamed in from the side. You could see that there had been rooms to the left, but they were all destroyed. The corridor they walked through had apparently been cleared and cleaned after the destruction.
At the end of the corridor, Captain Prillwitz stopped. The room straight ahead is our destination, he said. And here to the left is our little break room.
A thick white line was painted on the floor with oil paint. Both rooms lay beyond it.
IM Steffen was curious: Why not go straight to the destination?

No, said Captain Prillwitz. First, a cigarette break and some rest, then I need to brief you. We need the break. Beyond the white line, you can move freely, but the dirty clothes stay outside. I'll show you how it's done. Watch closely.
Captain Prillwitz first took off his field service jacket, demonstratively careful not to touch the outer side. He placed the jacket on the ground. *Before* the white line. Then he removed one boot and stepped with his bare foot, in just a sock, *behind* the white line. He did the same with the other foot. Then he carefully stepped out of his pants without letting them touch the ground. He placed the pants with the jacket. Next, he removed his underwear in the same way. Long underwear. He kept his briefs on. Standing in just socks, briefs, and rubber gloves, he reached for the backpack and opened it as wide as possible. He removed the left glove and, with his bare hand, pulled out the second backpack from inside the outer one. He placed it on his "clean" side of the corridor. He did the same with the folded plastic bag from the outer backpack. Finally, with his gloved hand, he packed the uniform, underwear, boots, and outer backpack into the plastic bag and sealed it.
That's how it's done, commented Captain Prillwitz. The bag stays here. The goal is that no part of your body comes into contact with the Zone's dirt. Nothing has proven harmful yet, but since we can't measure anything, we play it safe. Alright, your turn.
IM Steffen kept his thoughts to himself. The captain didn't need to explain; he knew the procedure exactly from army exercises involving chemical or nuclear weapons. It only reassured him that gas masks and protective suits were apparently unnecessary here. Whatever, he thought. He undressed as instructed and was explicitly praised by Captain Prillwitz.
After changing, they entered the room Captain Prillwitz had called the "break room." The walls were cracked but still seemed stable overall. Like the corridor, the room was completely cleared out. The floor was spotless, as far as you could say that in a ruin. The blast wave from the explosion apparently passed this room by, commented Captain Prillwitz. More importantly: our staff regularly clean this room thoroughly, and it's safe.
Since no outside light reached here, Captain Prillwitz placed a flashlight on the floor. For seating, there were "chairs" someone had stacked from stones. In the middle stood a large empty tin can used as an ashtray. First, they each took new underwear and a fresh field service uniform from the inner backpack and put them on. Only then did Captain Prillwitz invite IM Steffen to eat and took a seat on one of the "chairs." To his surprise, the food wasn't bad. Sandwiches, but decent and plentiful, with salami, cheese, even a yogurt with a spoon, all neatly packed and sealed in plastic. But only water from the canteen to drink.
Water is more versatile than coffee, commented Captain Prillwitz, but otherwise, our cook always takes good care of the people going into the Zone. Rinse your hands briefly before touching the sandwiches—safety that costs nothing shouldn't

be skipped.
He demonstrated, letting the water run onto the floor. The water on the floor doesn't matter, he said, your hands should be clean anyway. Then he took a hearty swig from the canteen.
IM Steffen followed suit.
For a while, no one spoke. Each was busy eating, lost in thought, and recovering.
Alright. Now comes the big secret, Captain Prillwitz finally said. But first, he pulled a pack of cigarettes and a matchbox from his jacket. Duett brand again, the best you could get in the GDR.
Want one?
IM Steffen took a cigarette too.
Captain Prillwitz lit a match and offered a light. He took a deep drag and exhaled audibly. - Next door is the proof that communism is right. And that it will triumph.
IM Steffen nearly choked and coughed. He was in the Party too ... the SED[34]. But there was a kind of unspoken agreement not to lay it on too thick. Unless you were a go-getter. A real hardliner. Grandiose speeches might be common among the Russians, but they exaggerated everything a bit. A German doing that, especially one-on-one, you'd better watch what you said. On the other hand, they had a restricted area and an entire Stasi unit stationed around this ruin. That suggested there had to be *something* to the claim. Well, let's hear it.
That cellar room over there, Captain Prillwitz continued, was built with fieldstone long ago. And from that cellar room, a staircase leads two meters deeper to a small niche, also all fieldstone. It's very old, and no one knows *how* old. As I said, our technology just doesn't work here. Nothing does. So you can only look and then report. Alright. Now, the Nazis set off a pretty massive explosion here shortly before the war ended. You saw how little of the concrete out front is left. From the damage and explosive residue, we can pinpoint exactly where the blast wave came from—it came from that old room, specifically from the niche. And nothing, I tell you *nothing*, was destroyed in that room. Only outside, in the newer part of the building, did the explosion have an effect.
IM Steffen whistled appreciatively.
Only this room here, where we're sitting, was spared by the blast wave, as I said, Captain Prillwitz went on, and apparently, the strange phenomena in the Zone only started after that explosion. Older local reports don't mention anything like it. As far as we know. There's some superstition about this place, sure, but it's vague, nothing concrete. No deaths, especially. What stands out are tales of an underworld, mythical figures rising from it, and people spending a hundred years

34 SED: Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands = Socialist Unity Party of Germany. Theoretically and historically a union of communists and social democrats, but in practice the social democrats in the GDR had been neutralized.

or more there. That sort of thing. And here's the thing: that underworld exists.
What???
You heard right. You go into that old room next door, down the few steps two meters deeper, into the niche, and in that niche is the secret gate to the underworld.
IM Steffen listened, breathless.
It's a completely separate world. Have you read Jules Verne's books?
Yes.
Also "Journey to the Center of the Earth"?
Yes.
That's roughly how you should picture it, only far more magnificent. And there are people living there. They're not our problem. Nor is that world itself. Scientists should study it, not us. Our problem is the interactions between that underworld and us, the ones that could become dangerous. You've experienced what's going on in the Zone. Those are forces someone could use for weapons to wipe us out. They could be weapons far surpassing the significance of atomic bombs. The question is, what are those forces, and where do they come from? We don't want to use them, unless we could harness energy from them, but what if the enemy finds out? We absolutely need to figure this out. And we suspect that either people are illegally going into the underworld, or coming to us from there, or both. We absolutely have to find out **w**ho does **w**hat, **w**hen, **w**here, ho**w**, **w**hy, and on **w**hose behalf. The seven big **W**s. That's your task. Are you up for it?
You said this underworld is magnificent?
Unimaginably magnificent, replied Captain Prillwitz. They say it has an addictive effect, it's so overwhelming to anyone who sees it. That's why full-time staff like me usually don't go there, got it? So we can keep an objective perspective. You experience and report, and I have to stay sober to extract the essential facts objectively. That means you go into the underworld alone, and I wait out here. Don't worry, it's not dangerous, and I won't be standing guard right by the niche —I'll stretch my legs. But I'll stay here.
What if I get lost? I don't even know what it looks like there. In Jules Verne, the way in wasn't usable to get back to the surface either.
No problem, said Captain Prillwitz, the path is much shorter. Just a few meters, really. And today, you're just doing a reconnaissance without a specific mission. A short state-funded vacation. Gather first impressions. Walk around a bit, look around, treat yourself. You can lie down somewhere, soak up the sun, eat what you want. Stay one night, and tomorrow at sunset, no earlier or later, you come back, and we'll evaluate everything.
Overnight?, asked IM Steffen.
Yes. You'll love it. Ready?
IM Steffen nodded apprehensively. A storm raged in his head. This was the

dream of dreams ... and he was part of it.
The cigarettes had long been smoked and tossed into the large tin can.
Captain Prillwitz reached into his backpack and pulled out two small Tetrapaks, like the ones IM Steffen knew from condensed milk; they were smaller than the quarter-liter milk Tetrapaks privileged Berlin schoolkids got, while in the provinces, you drank from plain bottles.
Alright. The serum again. - He handed IM Steffen one of the Tetrapaks. And a straw.
"Picasso tits," IM Steffen commented on the Tetrapaks, grinning. Then he read the label:

Breastmilk
Ultra-high temperature processed
germ-free homogenized
6 weeks shelf life unopened without refrigeration
Content: 100ml - 5.5% fat
Raspberry flavor
- For official use only -

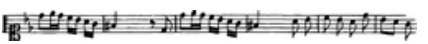
IM Steffen's eyes widened. - You guys spare no expense, living like the Emperor of China![35] - He poked his straw through the seal at the top of the Tetrapak. - Damn, he muttered, that I get to experience this a second time. Even as UHT milk. - He tasted it cautiously, very deliberately. - Not bad!, he praised. Of course, it has to be—if it tasted like Zwickau beer, humanity would've died out long ago.
Captain Prillwitz said nothing in response. So IM Steffen fell silent too and drank his Tetrapak empty. Down to the last drop, as far as the straw allowed.
Then they both stood up, and Captain Prillwitz led the way, flashlight in hand. The food and backpacks were left in the "break room." The neighboring cellar must indeed have been built centuries ago. The floor seemed to be packed clay, the rest was fieldstone vaulting without any bricks. Astonishing that it had withstood a massive explosion without damage. Captain Prillwitz shone the flashlight around so IM Steffen could take a look at the room. At the end of the vaulted room, a narrow staircase led downward. He now directed the flashlight's beam there. The staircase descended about two meters and ended at a niche, its back wall formed by a massive boulder. Around the boulder, it glittered gold.
Gold!, exclaimed IM Steffen.
No, replied Captain Prillwitz. Just pyrite crystals. Fool's gold. Though I was told they geologically don't belong in this area at all.

35 By the way: The last Empress of China and high dignitaries regularly drank breastmilk for health and longevity. Imperial wet nurses were kept in a dedicated "milk palace" for this purpose.

IM Steffen was slightly disappointed. But only slightly. Then he noticed a roughly meter-high woman carved into the boulder. The woman's hands held her breasts out to the viewer, as if offering them directly or at least drawing attention to them. The legs of the carved woman were stylized as a large "O," as if suggesting an open vulva.
Is that a Sheela-na-gig?, asked IM Steffen, almost reverently, as the figure on the boulder pulled him away from gold fever back to curiosity.
A what?
They have such figures in Ireland and Great Britain, said IM Steffen excitedly, being culturally well-educated. Women carved into stone, he added. But as far as I know, they spread their vulva wide instead of offering their breasts. The Normans supposedly brought them from Spain and France.
Don't know. Don't think so, grumbled Captain Prillwitz.
But it's supposed to mean something like "witch with breasts" or "woman with breasts" or something, IM Steffen pressed.
I only know of similar depictions in the Near East, said Captain Prillwitz, but that's not our concern now.
IM Steffen grumbled in annoyance.
Now, now, we're not on a vacation here.
That was only half true, but IM Steffen didn't press further, as far more than just this female relief awaited him. Explanations could come later—postponed wasn't canceled.
Alright!, Captain Prillwitz cut the discussion short. The pyrite down there is real, but the big stone in the middle is just an optical illusion. It's an entrance to this underworld, hidden from casual observers. You just walk down there, toward that relief, and pass through. It's like walking through a curtain. A little jolt, and you're through. It's simple, just don't make the mistake of hesitating.
IM Steffen took a deep breath.
Not yet, Captain Prillwitz interrupted. Just go through with momentum. You're not the first, so no worries. Once you're in, it'll be pretty dark at first, and moving feels a bit heavy. Kind of like underwater. But don't worry, you can breathe. Just keep going! Then you'll arrive in a room with washing facilities. Undress completely, wash thoroughly. Once that's done, don't get dressed—look around. There's a kind of large table. You take it. A moment later, you'll be transferred to this underworld through some still-unexplained effect.
Unbelievable, IM Steffen whispered. High technology?
We don't know yet. Probably. But it could also be a natural phenomenon, something physical that someone used in an unknown way. Unfortunately, it prevents bringing objects from this underworld here.
I thought you were afraid of exactly that?
Either way, it doesn't work, Captain Prillwitz cut in. Not in either direction.

You'd even arrive without your field gear. Don't worry about it—nudity is ... well ... pretty standard in this underworld. You won't stand out without clothes. Once you're there, take your time looking around, no rush, but no big excursions. Gather impressions, spend the night, and return tomorrow at sunset. Not later, not earlier, but not obsessively precise either. And avoid contact if you see anyone. If someone speaks to you, play dumb. Don't make up excuses or explanations—that just gets you tangled. Deflect questions with questions. But as I said, it's unlikely you'll meet anyone. Worst case, you're just lost. But never tell anyone about the passage, got it? Never! On your return, you'll pass through the room with the washing facilities again, but you don't need to wash again. Just come back, done.
- Alright, let's get to it. Don't be scared—it'll be more enjoyable than you think.
Captain Prillwitz even smiled. The smile of a not particularly likable person, a highly disciplined, compulsive one, but still, he smiled. And IM Steffen felt that Captain Prillwitz was showing the maximum relaxation he was capable of.
IM Steffen's heart was definitely pounding, but his excitement outweighed his apprehension. So he resolutely descended the steps toward the niche.
From behind, he heard Captain Prillwitz once more: Oh, one more thing—when you're through, there's something painted on the wall right near the entrance. A text. Memorize it before you come back. It's just a kind of memory test. But you only need to do it right before you leave. And in case I'm not here in the room when you return, I'll leave the flashlight here. Got it?
Got it, IM Steffen over his shoulder, read and memorize the text just before returning, and the flashlight will be here.
IM Steffen took a deep breath and strode purposefully toward the large boulder with the female relief. One step ... and IM Steffen vanished into the stone.

Captain Prillwitz looked at his watch. He stood still. He waited exactly ten minutes. Then he descended the stairs himself. Without hesitation. And as he stepped through the stone, an observer might have gotten the impression that he did so with practiced ease.



Peridëis

Captain Prillwitz paddled through a shimmering, deep red, swirling liquid. He pushed through with force. He had strength. A trained body. Not overly muscular, but tough. As a child, he had been teased as a little fat boy, but he had sworn to himself to one day show them all. Until he got his chance. People were needed for the FDJ order groups, for deployment at large events. And there was self-defense training. Elements of judo and karate, but not for competition—rather to

overpower opponents, detain them, and appear strong. For the first time in his life, Udo Prillwitz found a sport he truly enjoyed. Even in the dreaded 3000-meter run, he fought doggedly until he met the standard for the first time. A grade of 4. And he got better, until one day he achieved a grade of 1. Willpower! Iron willpower! The local FDJ district leadership took notice of him and made him the head of a local order group. His order group became the best, the most reliable, because Udo Prillwitz was reliable. And someone brought Udo Prillwitz to the attention of the Stasi. The loner who had long believed that others only disliked him because he was the only one who clearly and uncompromisingly represented the true stance of the Party. But no one dared to mess with him anymore. A single brawl after school had made it clear that he was not to be trifled with. Finally, the day of his life came. He had been invited to the military district command. But there, a man from the Ministry for State Security[36] had been waiting for him. Whether he could imagine fighting for the victory of communism in the Ministry for State Security. As an officer. How proud he was then. The elite. And he was to be part of it. So he signed, agreeing to speak to no one about the contact. They helped him complete his Abitur, and then the time had come. Not conscription, but recruitment, as it was called in the MfS. Thus, he was trained as a lone operative: parachuting, diving, flying helicopters, small aircraft, foreign languages, foreign missions as an instructor and military advisor, escorting secret transports. And now the crowning achievement. The Zone. Nothing was more secret than the Zone. And he was part of the tiny circle of people who knew about it.

And he knew a little more ... more than less conscious comrades were allowed to know, those not yet as ideologically tempered as he was.

And for the first time in his life, he had found something that *completely* fulfilled him. Without having to expect betrayal and deviants everywhere. He personally would find a way to show the world how to create true happiness for all. And everyone would be grateful to him for it, even fall at his feet.

Now Captain Prillwitz had passed through the rock, leaving the deep red swirling behind.

He emerged in a clean, white-tiled shower cubicle, with a steel locker in front of it. Behind him, on the wall, was a stylized woman offering her breasts to the viewer, laid out in tiles. The ridges of the brick-red floor tiles also depicted this woman.

Captain Prillwitz undressed, neatly hung his field service uniform in the locker, and closed it.

Then he showered thoroughly. Shampoo had been provided. But they had forgotten a towel. Sloppiness. Captain Prillwitz shook the water from his hair and

36 MfS = Ministerium für Staatssicherheit = Ministry for State Security = Stasi. Within the MfS, the word “Stasi” was considered derogatory and typically avoided. Only regular guard soldiers used it with a mocking undertone.

skin as best he could.
The room beyond the shower was perhaps 3 meters long and 2 meters wide, so not large, but that was perfectly sufficient. Most of the space was taken up by a roughly 2-meter-long tiled concrete block, clad on the sides with white tiles and topped with brick-red ribbed tiles depicting a stylized woman offering her breasts to the viewer.
Captain Prillwitz lay down on the tiled block and closed his eyes.
A whirlwind seized him and shook him through.
But only for a few moments.
His senses faded.
Then it was done.
Captain Prillwitz opened his eyes again.
A shiver of happiness ran through him. The land of dreams. The bright future. And he had tasks whose importance his superiors lacked the deeper insight to understand. And the higher morality that still needed to be developed, even in communism. But he had the deeper insight and the higher morality. Oh, if only humanity knew...
As always, that physical-emotional reaction came. Captain Prillwitz pulled himself together. A man can suppress an orgasm if he has enough willpower.
So Captain Prillwitz stood up. He went down on his knees and exhaled sharply. But he managed. He hadn't wasted his strength.
Captain Prillwitz found himself in a cozy rock cave, with fresh air and warm daylight streaming in. Outside, a pretty valley between sky-high steep cliffs was visible. But Captain Prillwitz had no time to look. Duty called. Not that time was overly tight, but duty is duty. Captain Prillwitz turned to a low cave passage that led not outside but slightly downward into the mountain. He bent down and entered.
At first, it was dark in the rock passage that opened up. But Captain Prillwitz knew his way. He simply held both arms out to the sides to keep his bearings. He knew you couldn't hit your head here and that the ground would always be the same solid gravel, without sudden rises, steps, or chasms.
Three or four minutes passed as Captain Prillwitz moved steadily downward through the passage when a faint green fluorescent light became perceptible. A little later, the contours of the passage became visible. He shouldn't have looked out into the bright daylight earlier. Not at all! In that case, his eyes would have adjusted to the darkness much faster. But no matter. You didn't need a lamp here. Never. Captain Prillwitz now moved more quickly.
After about ten minutes, the small downward passage ended, and Captain Prillwitz arrived in a large, level cave where the walls glowed a bit brighter. Several passages converged in this cave, and the floor was uniformly covered with solid gravel. One of the passages was blocked by a barrier. A red-and-white

barrier, like those at railway crossings. Though much simpler, made from a plain tree trunk. Above the passage with the barrier, written on the rock wall in somewhat clumsy letters, was:

RESTRICTED AREA
NO ENTRY!

As far as one could judge in Peridëis, the inscription was in German.

A man was waiting in the cave for Captain Prillwitz. The man wore a strangely nondescript, somewhat worn men's suit, with a dress shirt and tie, and on his head an even stranger cap with a brim all around. From the suit jacket, a double strap protruded on the left, holding a riding crop and a coiled piece of rope. The suit pants were cut somewhat differently than those known from the outside world, as there was no fly in the front but a wide flap like on traditional trousers. This had practical reasons to facilitate the satisfaction of needs with a suitable comrade, who in turn wore a skirt designed to ease the satisfaction of needs. Why the strange man left his backside exposed, however, remained questionable.

All this might not have stood out to an unsuspecting observer, at least not if looking from the front, because something far more striking was next to the man: a shaggy, massive, enormous creature with a broad skull, grinning dully while eating rocks from the wall. That was still acceptable—why shouldn't such a beast eat rocks from the wall? But the creature had legs like those of an elephant or rhinoceros, and six of them. It was a six-legger, and they lived exclusively in the numerous underground passages and caves of this underworld.

The man stood at attention as Captain Prillwitz reached the cave. Captain Prillwitz found it only natural that a man was waiting for him and merely nodded wordlessly with a professional expression. A superior must not show that a subordinate's meticulous duty fulfillment deeply impressed him. They'd have to honor him somehow, someday. But Captain Prillwitz dismissed the idea. In the end, the honor might just make the man cheeky and sloppy.

The man handed Captain Prillwitz a suit like the one he was wearing. Pants with an exposed backside, a flap instead of a fly in the front, plus a dress shirt and tie, and for the head, a strange cap with a brim all around. The suit was even worn-looking. And a double strap with a riding crop and rope, which Captain Prillwitz fastened to his left side.

Once Captain Prillwitz had put everything on, the man drew his crop from its holster, gave the six-legger a measured tap on its hindquarters, and called: Down!

Grumbling, the six-legger lay down on the ground. The man helped Captain Prillwitz climb onto the six-legger's back. He himself did not mount.

Up! The six-legger received another light tap on its hindquarters with the crop. - The creature stood up.

The man went to the barrier and opened it.
Go! - And the six-legger trotted off leisurely, passing under the opened barrier deeper into the cave system. The man closed the barrier and followed the six-legger. He had to walk briskly, as the six-legger, despite its bulk, kept a decent pace. The passage widened at times, narrowed at others, then side passages branched off, and once they crossed a cave that seemed gigantic and sloped further downward. Far below in the large cave, a deep red glow could be sensed, but Captain Prillwitz paid it no mind. Otherwise, everything was permeated by the strange green fluorescent glow. Only once did they see daylight at the end of a side passage, but the six-legger turned its head away unwillingly; apparently, it didn't particularly like daylight.
Time passed. Passage after passage, cave after cave. Some were beautiful to behold, others bizarre. Even strange flying creatures roamed the cave ceilings. But they kept moving steadily onward.
Comrade!, the strange guide in the strange suit suddenly called out.
What?, Captain Prillwitz snapped back irritably, having been lost in thought during the steady trot.
I need to ... I can't ...
Grumbling in annoyance. Fine, said Captain Prillwitz. I'm not a monster. Let's take a break. But unpack the field rations first.
Yes, Comrade!
The strange man drew his crop from its holster, gave the six-legger a measured tap on its hindquarters, and called: Down!
After Captain Prillwitz dismounted, the strange man unloaded two bags from the six-legger, called: Up!, and let the six-legger choose a rock to eat. Then he took out two seat cushions and a small round tablecloth from the bags, spreading it on the ground. Next, he unpacked a torch sealed with a cork at the top. When he pulled the cork from the torch, a flame ignited on its own. The six-legger, dining on a rock about ten meters away, let out an annoyed grumble but continued eating leisurely. The firelight didn't seem as bothersome to it as daylight. Or perhaps it didn't care at all, and the grumble was just a typical reaction to surprise.
May I now ..., Comrade...?, the strange man asked again.
Yes, replied Captain Prillwitz, but don't dawdle too long. Did you bring milk?
The strange man nodded.
Drink it afterward. Now go!
The strange man hurried off. While Captain Prillwitz ate what he called "field rations," occasional rapid panting could be heard in the distance when the six-legger closed its mouth. This was how these creatures were trained, as grinding rocks was not exactly a quiet affair, even in Peridëis. It must be said that only Captain Prillwitz was bothered by the sounds of the panting man in the distance; normally, such things weren't an issue in Peridëis. But eventually, it was quiet,

and the strange man returned to Captain Prillwitz.
Sit down, said Captain Prillwitz. Were you able to hold back your seed?
Yes, Comrade Captain.
Very good. Drink your milk anyway!
Captain Prillwitz reached for two vials, apparently filled with milk, handed one to the strange man, and took the other for himself.
To your health!
To your health!
Both drank their vials to the last drop.
How do you manage to restrain yourself like that?, asked the strange man.
Self-discipline, replied Captain Prillwitz.
And when women are present, enticing your senses?
You have to at least hold back as long as you can.
But...
Wait, wait. I'm not saying you have to. I'm not a monster. But I have to, because I have a task. An important task!
Silently, they finished the "field rations," then packed up, retrieved the six-legger, and continued.
The journey went on through passages and caves, caves and passages, and numerous opportunities to admire the true beauty of the caves were missed. It would have been worth it, as only some caves showed the uniform, dim green fluorescence; most shimmered in different colors, though never as bright as the daylight above. Once, they passed directly by an exit to the open air. The strange man had to blindfold the six-legger because it refused to go past the exit. It seemed to mind only the daylight, while bright caves didn't bother it. On the contrary: the creature seemed to have aesthetic sensibilities, as it lingered in some caves as if it particularly liked them. At least, it gave that impression, though it could also have been lured by other things in those caves. But what could be done? Duty is duty, and that applied to the six-legger too. And on they went, time after time.
Only once did Captain Prillwitz order a stop, as they passed through a large cave whose black walls were studded with tiny crystals that glowed in all the colors of the rainbow. Moving your head slightly made entirely different colors shimmer. For minutes, Captain Prillwitz sat on the six-legger, staring into the cave. Not a sound was heard. When he finally ordered them to move on, his voice sounded choked. And if it had been brighter, one might have seen a tear making its way down his cheek. But he said nothing about it.
And on they went.
But eventually, they reached their destination. At least as far as the strange world of caves and passages was concerned. The creature had known it long before, as it had sped up toward the end.

They stopped beside a silvery-gold gleaming large cave. Here, the green fluorescent glow was almost entirely absent, so the strange man took a torch from the bag. He conspicuously kept his distance from the silvery-gold gleaming cave, as if the air in it were bad. The strange man pulled the cork from the top of his torch, and behold, a flame ignited, illuminating the passage in front of the cave. When the torch's light fell into the neighboring cave, it sparkled back from even the farthest corners. By the way: it was fool's gold, also called pyrite. The same kind seen in the boulder that hid the transition between the other world and this one. Why fool's gold was found here too, no one knew. It was just there and looked pretty. Done. Fool's gold was found in many places in Peridëis; it wasn't exactly earth-shattering. Except when particularly beautiful crystals formed in it. Only the inhabitants of this land didn't particularly like fool's gold. Even animals seemed to avoid it. For whatever reason.

After the six-legger lay down on command, Captain Prillwitz dismounted, and the strange man in the strange suit set the six-legger free. The six-legger (lo and behold!) spurned the fool's gold and trotted off to where there were six-legger bulls. The six-legger was, in fact, a female, a six-legger cow. This is entirely irrelevant, but there are other books that constantly emphasize gender without it mattering. So let's note that the six-legger cow wanted to go to the six-legger bulls for some uncomplicated fun. But as said, it doesn't matter, as six-leggers would come when called. Just like that. Maybe they were curious but too dumb to venture through unfamiliar caves alone and find their way back. In that case, working as a pack animal was a mutually beneficial deal—strength for intelligence—and animal welfare advocates among the readers could relax again.

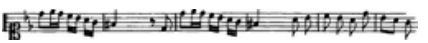
But we've digressed.

Captain Prillwitz was now holding the torch, and the strange man in the strange suit carried the two bags. Together, they headed toward a small passage, above which, written on the rock wall in somewhat clumsy letters, was:

INSTITUTE FOR SPECIAL SERVICES

As far as one could judge in Peridëis, this inscription was also in German.

The narrow passage led them gently upward to the surface.



Special Services

They emerged into light-flooded chambers carved into the towering cliffs that lined the valleys of Peridëis, about ten meters above the adjacent valley. Below, at the cliff's base, sprawled a small town, likely formed where four valleys

converged. A city wall with gates sealed it off from the outside. Beyond, tales spoke of bizarre phenomena defying the principles of dialectical materialism per Marx and Engels. Captain Prillwitz had never ventured out. For secrecy, he entered the town only in civilian clothes, if at all.
A surge of joy hit him as he surveyed the room and looked outside. Here was the radiant future, humanity's bliss. He was the pioneer from the old world.
Pioneer, yes. Duty called.
All comrades of his covert unit within the cliff were in formation, except the guard at the cave entrance and two others on watch below, at the staircase leading from the street into their cliff building.
The rest stood ready. At the back, the guard unit men in uniforms with breeches (sadly, no boots—unavailable here). Closer, in service uniforms with long trousers, were the rear echelon men (cook, janitor, messenger, etc.). Except the hexapod riders, who wore standard civilian suits mandated for external duties, all slightly worn, unlike the pristine uniforms. Everyone carried a riding crop on the left, as weapons were unobtainable here, even for the finest breastmilk. The men's trousers had a flap covering the penis, but their buttocks remained bare. It irked Prillwitz that his unit couldn't wear the GDR's field-gray uniforms, reserved for the Peris' bailiffs—a galling insult. But the Peris weren't to be trifled with; expulsion was the ultimate threat. So, the uniforms were made from the same suit fabric as the civilian attire. Not bad, Prillwitz conceded—sometimes you're forced into good ideas. Such "civil uniforms" should be mandatory for MfS internal duties, given how some younger comrades dressed outrageously.
Moving on: nearest to Prillwitz stood his unit's core, the combat team—all women. They wore pink uniform ribbons in their hair (caps were unenforceable), short pink uniform dresses baring their breasts, with skirts so brief that a hint of buttocks and pubis peeked out. Naturally, the women carried no crops. Oh, and at the front were three men in pink uniforms, indispensable combat specialists, immune to female charms.
Prillwitz marched along the formation, saluting with his right hand, left resting on his crop's handle.
Reaching the end, he turned to a board mounted on the wall:

BOARD OF BEST

1. Helga	🩸🩸🩸🩸🩸🩸🩸🩸🩸🩸
2. Gabriele	🩸🩸🩸🩸🩸
3. Monika	🩸🩸🩸🩸

Thunder and lightning!, thought Captain Prillwitz as he looked at the board. Every drop on the board represented a jug of milk, and Comrade Helga had given

ten jugs of milk yesterday!
For among comrades, one addressed each other with “Du,” even when it came to unpleasant matters. But here, a respectable achievement was to be honored. Moreover, the letters on the board had been copied almost flawlessly.
He turned around so that he now faced his assembled staff. Comrade Helga, Comrade Gabriele, and Comrade Monika, step forward!, he called, making an effort to put warmth into his voice. This didn’t always succeed, but this time it sounded almost a little relaxed.
The three comrades stepped forward.
Captain Prillwitz put solemnity into his voice: For our important task, we need one thing above all: foreign currency! The three comrades here have made an outstanding contribution to foreign currency acquisition. For this, they will be personally honored by me in a few minutes. But my thanks go to all of you. Both for the breastmilk that is milked from you daily and for the tireless physical effort that leads to ejaculation in the target individuals, thus to their exhaustion, and ultimately to the increase in our milk sales in the operational area, meaning the generation of foreign currency. Comrades! The specific conditions of this country must be utilized for our task! The gold of this country is the milk of our women! Three hooray for the women!
Hooah! - Hooah! - Hooah!
But let us not forget the men who provide important support services, thereby creating the conditions under which the women can carry out their responsible tasks in a relaxed manner. On behalf of our important task, I also express explicit thanks to you, comrades.
Captain Prillwitz nodded to the far right, where the guard soldiers stood. They understood, and four of them hurried to a corner where a large recliner stood. They quickly dragged it over and placed it next to Captain Prillwitz, directly in front of the three comrades to be honored. Then they reached to the side of the recliner and raised a mechanism, which now clearly revealed the chair’s function: It was a Bum-Bum chair, and the supports on the side allowed the woman to rest her legs comfortably. The four soldiers hurried back to their ranks.
Comrade Monika, you achieved third place today, said Captain Prillwitz, as gently as he could, lie down on the pleasure chair so you can receive your honor!
Comrade Monika beamed, rushed to the chair, and lay back in it, her legs spread wide with the help of the two supports, without it being strenuous for her.
Captain Prillwitz approached her and unbuttoned the two buttons that held his fly closed. The fly opened, revealing his erect penis. He stepped toward Comrade Monika, whose lap was at the ideal height, and entered her. He panted, in-out, in-out, in-out, in-out. Comrade Monika let out an enthusiastic yelp, just as he liked it best. Yes, he was truly a godsend for the women who had honestly earned him. In-out, in-out, in-out. But he had to be careful not to spill his seed too soon.

There! Comrade Monika's yelping quickly escalated into a sharp squeal, and her sex began to contract rhythmically, signaling that she had received her honor.
Let someone try to match that. Just a few movements, and the women were already coming.
Comrade Monika stood up, somewhat dazed, and still panting, she rejoined the formation, while Comrade Gabriele approached unprompted, as was customary for such honors. Comrade Gabriele also received her honor before Captain Prillwitz could no longer hold back his seed.
Now Comrade Helga, who had given ten jugs of milk, stepped forward and positioned herself. His best! Captain Prillwitz quickly approached her so that his seed wouldn't spill on its own and thus be wasted. It took only a few movements until Comrade Helga reached her peak, and the pulsing of her sex practically sucked his seed out of him. He held onto her and nearly collapsed with pleasure. The world spun before his eyes. Yesssss!, he was a stallion, he had shown three comrades what a stallion he was. That this was so didn't surprise him. He was *the* man for this world; back home, they just weren't ready for him yet.
Breathing heavily, he disengaged and stood up.
A comrade hurried forward with a damp cloth to gently dry his private parts. After finishing, she buttoned up his fly and scurried off.
Comrade Helga, the best, still lay wide open in the pleasure chair.
Comrades!, said Captain Prillwitz, panting, Comrades!, we have a difficult task, and everyone has their place. I will now eat first, but in one hour, I will inspect your duty stations. I expect you to carry out your work properly. Dismissed!
All the staff scattered in various directions. Only Comrade Helga remained behind.
Come!, said Captain Prillwitz, accompany me to the dining room!
The dining room was one floor higher in the maze of various rock chambers and offered a pleasant view of the small town at its feet. Though it's almost unnecessary to emphasize this, as this view was available from nearly every room. But since the view was beautiful, it shouldn't be overlooked.
As soon as Captain Prillwitz had taken a seat near a window opening, Comrade Helga approached and offered her breast for his nourishment without further hesitation. He had spilled his seed into her, so he needed replenishment. Unfortunately, Captain Prillwitz always drank dutifully but never with the passion with which other men often indulged in a veritable frenzy on such occasions. Not that it was necessary, but it somehow added a little spark. Especially to the two little wings between the legs and what they covered. But since Comrade Helga was exemplary in her milk supply, Captain Prillwitz got what he needed comfortably and abundantly. Yes, she could have given even more.
You may go, said Captain Prillwitz, wiping his mouth.
And now the food!, he added loudly.

Though, if he were honest with himself, he was already quite full. But the food here was good.
After he had eaten—there had been tender lamb with truffles, vegetables, and new potatoes, accompanied by an exceptionally good white wine—he decided to inspect the brothel first. To attract more men, he had set up two types of brothels. One was a kind of quick-service stop, intended for men who needed to satisfy their urges hastily between two tasks. One could, of course, have had a comrade dance lasciviously to arouse them while the man took care of himself by hand, but Captain Prillwitz found that immoral, as the sexual drive was not meant for oneself. So, he had the window openings on the outside of his office boarded up in such a way that only a number of holes remained. The holes were just large enough for each of his comrades to push their lower body through to the outside. Out on the street, a comrade fastened their legs in a spread position with loops above the hole, so the comrade didn't have to exert herself unnecessarily. This way, only the open lap was available in the streetlight, ready for use, while everything above remained hidden. One of the comrades stood outside at the cash register, keeping an eye on things to ensure that only penises were inserted into the offered "plums" and that no one tickled the strapped legs. The quick-service stop, in the light of day, unfortunately brought in very little, and all too often, an eye was turned when a man sweet-talked the cashier or someone cheated. But ultimately, it was only about enticing men to ejaculate, because in that case, they urgently needed milk, which could be sold to them a few meters away in the well-known highest quality, either powdered or as women's butter. Sales were made against promissory notes for all kinds of work, sealed with the man's fingerprint, or in exchange for goods. If a man withheld his seed, well, tough luck, but the comrade, if he was good, at least had her pleasure without lifting a finger.
The second type of brothel, a dozen meters further inside the rock chambers near the street, was more profitable. In the first brothel, only the women who were currently less in demand due to fashion, or those who felt no inclination for effort at the moment, or those who had no interest in men but were keen on swollen penises, served. One simply lay down and left the strenuous part to the penises (not the men). Meanwhile, one pictured a splendid guy in one's mind's eye, or, depending on the woman's preferences, perhaps a brutal man, a real pig, or whoever or whatever else. Such fantasies are not uncommon, let's not kid ourselves.
In the second brothel, significantly more was earned, but it required imagination and dedication from the women. It worked like this: As soon as a man entered the room, one of the comrades immediately charmed him and got him thoroughly worked up. A difficult task, because if the man backed out, the poor comrade was left with a soaking wet lap and had to figure out how to calm herself down. But fortunately, that wasn't the norm. She fired him up as best she could. And when he had already lost his senses, they negotiated the price for her milk, which was

offered fresh from the breast here. Once they agreed, in goods or a sealed work obligation, she rode him. Or he rode her. Or they played other games. Eventually, he spilled his seed in her or withheld it, which would make her pout. It didn't really matter whether the man spilled into the woman, as the milk was already paid for. But some women made it part of the deal that he would spill, as it somehow boosted their self-esteem to carry fresh male seed. Proof that one was desired. It was also said to improve mood, make one more beautiful, and other such things that no one knew if they were true. But since no one knows and it didn't hurt, it was only fair that men spilled into the women when they were getting their milk. Well, after the final act, there was usually a short break. They chatted, maybe ate or drank something. But in the end, always and without exception, he took back from her breast, with profit, what had just flowed from his penis. Otherwise, he risked turning into a satyr. Then came vows to see each other again, or not. And he went on his way satisfied, while she rested a bit or got the next man. This was an important task, the highly esteemed, incomparable, brilliant Captain Prillwitz had told them. Although in Peridëis, no one even knew what "important" meant, doing something that pleased Captain Prillwitz was always a pleasure.

Captain Prillwitz found everything in the brothel to be in top order, turned a blind eye when a man slipped past the cashier, and climbed past the guards back up the stairs to the higher floors. Thus, he reached the dairy, which was secured by its own guard due to the valuable milk stocks. Here, it became clear what the pink-uniformed specialists were for. These were the milkers, all gay due to their finesse, true magicians when it came to the art of coaxing the last drop of milk from the breasts of the milked comrades. One must know that a breast gives far more milk when it is caressed, coaxed, and tricked, rather than trying to force it. A breast must want to, must whimper to have its milk taken, experienced milkers said. The best of them only needed to come near a breast, and it started to drip or even squirt. There were all sorts of milking benches, depending on what the women preferred and what kind of breasts they had. There were recliners with cutouts at breast height that could be raised, lowered, or tilted, simple grips on the wall with a table below for the milk jug, and much more. And another advantage of the gay milkers: they didn't touch the women. Captain Prillwitz was proud of his idea of gay milkers. Sultans and the like had all been fools for having poor boys castrated. As a Marxist, he despised them for this cruelty, when the solution was so simple.

One of the milkers now approached Captain Prillwitz: Oh, Comrade Captain! You wanted to know if we could cultivate milk in different flavors. Unfortunately, we haven't succeeded yet, I'm inconsolable. But we did find one thing: If a woman is fed a whole-food diet for at least four full days with only plant-based food, so no milk or meat, her milk turns sour if left standing. But if she gets meat again, even

just a little, the milk doesn't turn sour[37].
Captain Prillwitz rubbed his chin. And finally answered: But that's already a result, don't you see? See what you can make of it. But keep it secret! Where I come from, they manage to make much more out of milk than is known here. They call it yogurt, cheese, and so on[38]. The milker walked away.
Captain Prillwitz was not dissatisfied. The comrades here in his own secret office carried out orders more conscientiously than he knew from the other side. And that, even though there was no pay. This was close to communism! Only, one had to practically chew up for them what they were supposed to do. They didn't have real ideas of their own. On the other hand: that way, they also didn't have any *stupid* ideas of their own. But the fact that the men were directly dependent on the women's breastmilk was a real problem. Hopefully, one that could be solved. He was working on it. For now, the most important thing was to concentrate power. And economic power was gained here through milk and, of course, also through possessions. Not that possessions played a role in Peridëis, since almost everything could be obtained without much work, but still. Concentrating possessions was surely a strategically important decision.
Captain Prillwitz climbed the steps to the top floor of the rock. This floor was reserved solely for him. A guard saluted. Two more flights of stairs, and Captain Prillwitz was at the top. He opened the heavy wooden door to his chamber. A light-flooded room greeted him. An enormous room. With its own swimming pool fed by a rock spring, a magnificent view, furniture made of exquisitely grained wood, the floor inlaid with rare colorful stones found deep in the cave system of Peridëis, a huge bed, and everything else one could desire in terms of comforts.
Captain Prillwitz flopped onto the huge bed and let out a moan of delight. How wonderful it was here! He deserved this. He was working on the future of this country. He was the only one with a plan that could lead humanity into a bright future.
To his right was a board with a row of thick cords, each with a wooden bead at the end. Above each cord was a drawn symbol. He pulled the cord with the symbol of a naked woman, her vulva prominently emphasized. Moments later, there was a knock, and when he called, Come in!, a stunning, completely naked woman appeared. When she looked at him questioningly, he said curtly: Do it with your mouth.
He lay motionless on his back, eyes closed, as she scurried over with a smile, knelt between his legs, opened her lips, and took his penis into her mouth...
...after he had spilled his seed and she, with his permission, had taken a sip of her own milk to wash it down, she provided him with the necessary replenishment

37 That's true.
38 In Peridëis, no animal milk is produced. Allegedly, this inspired the vegan idea that humans don't need animal milk, though this isn't documented.

from her own breast, then scurried off, closing the heavy wooden door quietly, very quietly, and Captain Prillwitz was alone again.
When he had recovered, Captain Prillwitz went to the window opening and looked out thoughtfully.
Duty was calling, and he really should head back, he thought. But oh well, he'd treat himself to one night. It wasn't dark yet, but he was tired. So he returned to his bed, flopped down, and fell asleep seconds later.
A little later, it grew dark outside, and the sun, always at its zenith, transformed into the night moon. Soft sounds drifted in from outside, and the night was mild and pleasant. Captain Prillwitz slept a deep and restful sleep.
The next morning, he woke up fresh and rested. Good morning, said a pretty slave—no, comrade—standing beside his bed. She was dressed in a provocative light pink nightgown that left her breasts exposed. The sun was already shining brightly. The birds were chattering their usual silly nonsense they'd picked up somewhere, and one of them was stealing a piece of bread from the breakfast set out on the table. Captain Prillwitz liked to eat breakfast alone. Let him have it, the bird, thought Captain Prillwitz magnanimously; there were no diseases or parasites here. As long as it didn't traipse through the women's butter. But look at that, his instructions had been followed—the women's butter was covered.
The pretty sla—comrade lay down beside Captain Prillwitz in bed and offered him a breast for his morning drink. Waking up to a woman's breast was, of course, something else entirely compared to the blaring horn at his office in the other world. Though it was annoying that a man here had no other choice—he needed the women's breastmilk. Captain Prillwitz had once tried to see how long he could go without milk and still had unpleasant memories of it. A pain like being whipped. There was nothing to be done about it, and he resigned himself to the necessity. Alright, to be fair, the medicine wasn't unpleasant (especially right now, with the comrade practically gushing from her truly lovely breasts), but Captain Prillwitz didn't like being forced into anything. As he enjoyed the morning drink (the comrade assisted with milking motions), Captain Prillwitz slowly woke up. And at some point, he was satisfied.
Captain Prillwitz got up and went to the toilet. A sparkling clean water toilet, flushed by a constantly swirling mountain spring, but made of fine wood, with everything except the seat surface adorned with ornamental carvings. Even including that strange, recurring symbol of a woman offering her breasts to the viewer with her hands, her feet shaped into a large "O."
Afterward, Captain Prillwitz plunged into his swimming pool, where the water, as always, was at the perfect temperature. How do they manage that?, he wondered for a moment, as there was no technology of any kind here. But he didn't pursue the thought further. The pool was large enough for a few proper strokes, and Captain Prillwitz dove deep once, and when he surfaced, the comrade was already

waiting to dry him off with a large towel.
Captain Prillwitz stood perfectly still, enjoying the treatment. The fact that his penis became erect didn't bother him. On the contrary, it showed the comrade how she could motivate him to return here to lead them all into a bright future. And look! She understood. Or, more likely, he aroused her. In any case, her lips slid over his erect penis, which then reached its full size. Captain Prillwitz closed his eyes and trusted that the comrade would keep him balanced, a trust he could never muster in the other world. Her lips sucked skillfully, letting the penis slide out of her mouth, again and again. And when Captain Prillwitz opened his eyes and looked down, he saw the comrade's breasts bouncing in rhythm with her movements. Then he came, his seed spurting into her mouth with each thrust. Unfortunately, an orgasm right after waking never came as deeply from within the body as it did during the day, but what did it matter. The comrade had fulfilled her task well. He thanked her and allowed her to take a cup of fruit juice from his table. Then the comrade curtsied before him and left. You just couldn't break the women here of that curtsy. You painstakingly taught them to salute, and the next time, they'd curtsy again.
Now Captain Prillwitz was awake enough for his breakfast. He sat at the window opening in the best of moods and took one of those strange coffee fruits. Captain Prillwitz rhythmically and gently twisted and pulled at the fruit's stem until he had removed it. And behold: steam and the aroma of coffee rose from the fruit. Captain Prillwitz poured its contents into the waiting coffee pot and immediately took a full cup. A small pitcher of milk was ready, and he poured plenty into the coffee. You had to use much more breastmilk for coffee than cow's milk, but on the other hand, the milk coffee tasted excellent this way. Captain Prillwitz took one of the freshly picked rolls, supposedly brought here by dwarves. But he had never seen a dwarf. The butter was very white and melted delicately. This, too, was made from breastmilk, as consuming animal milk was considered unnatural. At first, Captain Prillwitz had to overcome a lot to try it, because it was one thing to enjoy a woman's breast in a state of sexual arousal (you'd do all sorts of things then), but quite another in a normal state, as far as that existed here in Peridëis, to spread women's butter on a roll and eat it. But it tasted exquisite, and with some experience, you could discern different aromas depending on which woman had provided the milk for the butter. Only inferior products were made from randomly mixed milk! No, normally the women tried to produce particularly fine milk through specific diets, the noble flavor of which was all the more pronounced in the butter made from it. There were veritable schools teaching this or that diet to produce the finest milk in the end. Some of it seemed like pure nonsense, though, and no one noticed a difference. But woe to the man who didn't at least feign applause, even if he didn't notice a thing. Not so among the women. Either they genuinely had a much finer sense of taste, or they simply had a better sense of

what the other woman wanted to hear.
Captain Prillwitz ate the first roll with just butter, savoring the delicate aroma on his palate. No complaints there. It was a true delicacy. But for the second roll, he reached for the salami, and for the third roll, he did so again.
Oh, what a life! All of humanity could have this if they didn't ruin everything and just listened to him. The tricky part was this: They had told him plain and clear that he was only *just* tolerated. And only in this place. The Peris only tolerated those they had brought here themselves. It was almost a miracle that it had so far been limited to that one and only visit from the bailiffs, and Captain Prillwitz didn't even have the faintest idea how they had found him. There was no registry office in this utterly chaotic land. So he preferred to stay inconspicuous and limited himself to cautious explorations and building the economic foundation. As he was doing now. More would only ruin everything. And the comrades in the combat unit were instructed to subtly agitate the men who visited them and to report those who might be suitable for exploring this land. Captain Prillwitz had drilled into them that this was the most important thing: that with their wonderful bodies, they could lure men to win them over for the fight for a bright future. Men who otherwise would never have been reached or listened. Once they lay exhausted in their arms, they were ready to hear cautious, tiny doses of the great cause. That's how it was. That was the secret work. Selling milk and acquiring labor services in the process was, of course, a clever move on his part, because you couldn't operate without a material base. Captain Prillwitz would love to explore the land himself. The tiny town at his feet lay at the end of a valley. Between the high, steep rock walls of the valley, a wall with a sturdy city gate blocked the only access. He had never seen what lay beyond with his own eyes. The caves alone were incredible; what must the rest of the land be like? People told fabulous tales, and if even a tenth of them were true... But he didn't dare disobey the bailiffs' orders, not under any circumstances. Too much was at stake. So he had to send out scouts who reported back to him in detail.
Captain Prillwitz was full and looked out wistfully once more. Unfortunately, he would have to leave now. The strange time dilation gave him some leeway, but not an unlimited amount. Captain Prillwitz stood up and descended the rock stairs. His secret unit was already assembled for the farewell. Captain Prillwitz gave two or three admonitions but otherwise kept it brief. When he was done, he walked toward the pink-uniformed women of his combat unit, let his gaze wander from woman to woman, and finally chose one: You're coming with me, comrade, he said. The comrade was, so to speak, his travel provisions. It sounded a bit unflattering, but in the end, it was just the truth.
He nodded to his personal power rider. Are you satisfied, or...?
Yes, Comrade Captain. I'm ready to depart.
Excellent!

So all three— the power rider (in that strange suit), Captain Prillwitz, and the comrade in her provocative pink uniform—descended the rock stairs into the underground. The power rider carried a torch so they wouldn't have to adjust their eyes to the darkness.
In the passage before the gold-silver-glittering cave, a six-legger was already waiting, but it wasn't eating, as the gold-silver-glittering stone apparently didn't appeal to it.
Make room!, called the power rider.
The six-legger obediently lay down, and the comrade climbed on at Captain Prillwitz's prompting, while he sat behind her.
Up!, called the power rider, and the creature rose with them.
And off they went, cave after cave, passage after passage, back to the transition that led to the other world.
The comrade in front of him on the six-legger was a bit fidgety, constantly pulling Captain Prillwitz's hand to her hidden little spot to pass the time or to her breasts for him to play with a bit. Captain Prillwitz wondered aloud if she had skipped duty, given how much it seemed to itch. Eventually, he'd had enough, dismounted from the six-legger, took over its lead himself, and ordered the power rider to climb up and give the comrade some calm. Only after this was done and the power rider had replenished his lost essence at her breasts did they switch roles again. Noticing the comrade pouting, Captain Prillwitz realized what was going on. When we arrive, I'll take you, not before!, he told her. Her mood improved immediately.
About an hour later, he ordered the comrade to turn to him and drank from her breasts without stopping to lose time. He allowed the power rider a drink during the obligatory picnic break, where the creature could also satisfy its hunger on the surrounding rocks.
They also stopped once more at the large cave with black walls studded with crystals that glowed in all the colors of the rainbow.
But eventually, they arrived. In the cave with the barrier where the journey had begun. Now it was time to say goodbye again. No, not say goodbye—he couldn't show that he was leaving Peridëis. He knew enough to understand that the inhabitants of Peridëis must *never* find out that he was from the outside. Captain Prillwitz had once tried to take a beautiful comrade with him to the other world, but she had been gripped by sheer terror when she saw the stone table that led to the other side. Even before the cave, she had screamed and fought with all her strength, biting and scratching, and finally, already on the altar table, she had kicked him in the testicles with full force. When he woke up, he was no longer in Peridëis but already in the white-tiled shower room of the transition to the other world. The pain had lasted only a fraction of a second and was gone here, at least. And so was the comrade, as he discovered when he returned to Peridëis. He never

saw her again. Since then, he hadn't quite dared to venture out from his office into the valleys of Peridëis. Even to Peridëis itself, he hadn't dared go for a long time, but it drew him back magnetically—he simply couldn't help it. His actions had no discernible consequences in Peridëis. None! So he slowly regained confidence, but as mentioned: out there, it still felt a bit eerie to him. Partly because of the Peris and their bailiffs, who only tolerated him. But also otherwise. People like him, who came from outside, were seen by the locals as sorcerers, witches, eerie beings with dangerous, inexplicable powers who definitely didn't belong to them. Captain Prillwitz didn't want that. He also hated that he possessed such powers, powers he was well aware of. Like flying on a broomstick, for example. That fundamentally violated the teachings of dialectical materialism, so he didn't do it. It was like some of his comrades back in the other world who secretly went to the Intershop, bought Western shower gel, for instance, and displayed it prominently in their bathroom. And maybe even refilled it with GDR-produced shower gel when the Western product ran out. That wasn't honest, and such a comrade couldn't be trusted. But he wanted to be consistent. Once he was in power, he would simply ban magic, and then the issue would resolve itself through forgetting over time. That simple. Being shapes consciousness, and magic was like religion—decaying, stinking, rotten. A lower level of consciousness.

But... for now, the journey was over.

Make room!, he heard the power rider call. The six-legger lay down. They dismounted.

Come here!, he called to the comrade. She didn't need to be told twice and playfully lifted her uniform skirt.

Yes, lie down, said Captain Prillwitz. And as she lay on the soft, comfortably warm gravel and raised her knees, he couldn't hold back any longer. He hadn't had a single moment of satisfaction during the entire ride. He went down on his knees, opened his fly, and the comrade helped him guide his erect penis into her vagina. This time, the pleasure lasted longer, and the power rider had long since leaned against the six-legger to finish satisfying himself when Captain Prillwitz finally spilled into the comrade. But for a farewell, you could take a bit of time, Captain Prillwitz decided. He drank only as much milk as was truly necessary (the comrade pouted a bit again) and left the rest to the power rider. The women here had more than enough milk for two men, but better safe than sorry—you didn't want to risk feeling unwell.

Captain Prillwitz undressed completely and handed his suit to the power rider.

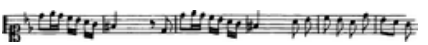
I'm going up now, he said. You know your task.

Both nodded.

After the farewell, Captain Prillwitz made his way through the narrow passage to the transition that would take him back to the other world. To the Zone. Where

IM Steffen would soon arrive as well.
There was the exit to the open air, where the bright daylight streamed in. This time, too, Captain Prillwitz didn't go outside but turned directly toward the cave with the strange stone table bearing the symbol of a woman holding her breasts out to the viewer.
It had to be done.
He lay naked on the stone table.
A flash cracked, the world vanished, he spun around, colors flashed, and then...
...he was back in the white-tiled shower cubicle with the steel lockers. He opened the locker where he had hung his field service uniform and put it on.
When that was done, he walked toward the wall where a woman holding her breasts out to the viewer was depicted in tiles. He walked into the wall. The wall closed behind him as if nothing had happened.
Captain Prillwitz slowly moved through the deep red, swirling liquid, his hands paddling.
And then he was suddenly back in the other world.

Captain Prillwitz immediately crouched down silently. Was the IM already here? He listened. He looked. No!
Once again, he had gotten lucky; he shouldn't take too many risks. As announced, Captain Prillwitz prepared a flashlight for the IM and used the remaining time to smoke a cigarette. After smoking, he carefully cleaned up and packed the used materials cautiously into a double layer of plastic, which he placed in his backpack.
When he heard a noise after some time, Captain Prillwitz called out: Already here?
Yes! I'm back!
A few moments later, IM Steffen entered the "break room."
We'll postpone the report until later, said Captain Prillwitz, standing up. No matter how urgent it feels. Put on rubber gloves, and then let's move out of the Zone without delay! We can smoke later. And remember: Move cautiously, stay right behind me. If I hit the dirt, you do too, fractions of a second later, and so on. Absolute focus on the Zone; we'll have all the time in the world for everything else afterward. Got it?
Got it.
Then let's go. … Oh, one more thing before I forget: Did you happen to read that text—the one right at the entrance?
I did: *Taste delight's best - the lecherous breast.* That's what it said.
Excellent. Now let's go. Remember: Caution and maximum focus!
I'm all eyes and ears.



Operational Report

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Meeting Report
==============

Date:                [redacted]
Codename:            Actor
Meeting Location:    Object P
Officer:             Prillwitz

Meeting Preparation:
====================

- First contact with the Unofficial Collaborator (IM)
- First-time access of the IM to operational area P
- Scheduled meeting
- Notify Zone entry 24 hours in advance
- Reserve guesthouse, full day
- Arrange visitor Wartburg with driver to Berlin
- Meeting point: 10:00 AM, Berlin-Buch S-Bahn station,
  in front of station hall
- Password: "Coffee Excursion"
- Return trip: Evening, unspecified time!
- Remind superior of appointment one day prior
- Standard equipment for Zone, 2 sets
- Canteen: 2 sets of Zone provisions
- 1 pack ground Moccafix Gold coffee[39]
- Post-mission: Charcoal, 1 pack bratwurst, mustard, ketchup,
  2 portions grill meat, 6 bottles Berliner beer,
  1 small bottle Goldbrand[40], rolls as noted below
- 08:00 AM: Pick up cake and rolls from bakery
- Confidentiality obligation, prepared for signature
- OdH[41]: Post-mission inspection
- Has IM been pre-briefed?
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39 Moccafix Gold: A really nasty ground GDR coffee; however, better coffee was only available for foreign currency, which the normal GDR citizen did not have, but the privileged GDR citizen with relatives in the West certainly did. A certain fair compensation was that no Stasi employee was allowed to have relatives in the West. In other words, Stasi employees all had to drink this coffee.

40 Voluntary Satyr Year = Freiwilliges ... Jahr: Alludes to a (West) German specialty for young adults - Voluntary Social Year or a voluntary year in government, NGOs, educational institutions of all kinds, historic preservation, environmental protection and so on. It replaces military service, but is also open to women who are not liable for military service and is paid for by tax revenue.

41 OdH: Officer of the House (german: Offizier des Hauses). Duty officer of a facility.

Meeting Evaluation:
==========

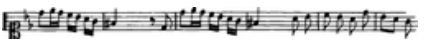
First meeting with the MA[42], IM was only generally pre-briefed. In the Zone, displayed disciplined behavior, neither fearful nor reckless. Post-mission inspection: No contamination detected, all protective protocols evidently followed. IM independently cleaned himself thoroughly in the shower lockout (prior army experience). Covert check of mission gear: No artifacts removed from the Zone.
IM openly expressed enthusiasm for operational area P, was highly impressed, and accepted the explanation of an as-yet unexplained natural-scientific phenomenon (physical-psychological). No tendency toward mystification observed.
IM did not voluntarily report intimate observations. Only upon targeted questioning did he admit to experiencing intense sexual arousal. Despite instructions to avoid personal contacts, this was unavoidable as two female individuals (identity unconfirmed) crossed his path, bare-breasted, and immediately pulled him into a house built into a high cliff, which IM described as a kind of nightclub. No questions were asked of him. He was hosted and coerced into sexual intercourse, which he engaged in twice, each with a different woman. On his own, IM added that one woman offered him milk secretion directly from her specific secondary frontal sex organs, which he consumed as it intrigued him personally. He particularly noted the exotic attire of those present, consisting of the two mentioned women, a male bartender, and four musicians. The musicians played an unfamiliar style with unknown instruments, but IM assessed the music's composition and performance as exceptionally high-quality.
IM stated he spent the night in said house.
The next morning, per IM, he took breakfast in bed with the two women. He reported being successfully pressed into further intimate acts, this time with both women simultaneously. Later, he returned at the agreed time (arrival as scheduled).
As instructed, IM read the welcome text in operational area P and accurately recited it upon return: "Taste delight's best - the lecherous breast."
IM was very surprised that far less time had passed outside the operational area than expected.
Post-mission decontamination and social gathering proceeded without notable incidents.

Reporting to the Head of the Unit on the Same Day:
Monitoring as planned.

42 MA: Employee (german: **Mit**a**r**beiter).

New Assignment and Behavioral Guidelines:
==========

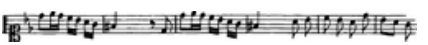
- Greater focus on the actual mission.
- Instruction on strict confidentiality toward all parties. In case of need to discuss, contact MA. Provided OdH phone number, password "Actor".
- IM support: Next meeting in a car, possibly a joint visit to a restaurant, to be arranged by phone, approximately 2 weeks.
- Next mission to operational area P planned in approximately 4 weeks, depending on IM’s condition.



Captain Prillwitz Reports to the Unit Leader

Captain Prillwitz knocked on the door of the head of the "Object P" office.
Come in!
Captain Prillwitz opened the door. May I enter?
Come in, take a seat. How did it go?
Captain Prillwitz sat down at the table. Actually two tables, light green Sprelacart[43], arranged in a T-shape, the head at the cross table and up to five subordinates at the long table. Captain Prillwitz had not brought any documents. What needed to be said, he had in his head. Only his classified workbook[44] lay in front of him, in case he needed to take notes. Captain Prillwitz reported that he was generally satisfied with the IM, and his behavior had been as expected.
A knowing grin flashed across the face of the office head. Captain Prillwitz did not grin. My God, this guy can't even loosen up a bit, the office head thought to himself, with him breathing down your neck, you can't get away with anything. But he didn't say it.
And did he ... pass the memory test?, he asked casually.
Yes. The IM reported that he read the text "*Taste delight's best - the lecherous breast*" on a rock wall near the passage.
The superior of Captain Prillwitz turned pale.
Captain Prillwitz didn't notice it, though.
Was there anything else?, he asked after a brief hesitation.
No, standard instructions, the next meeting will be arranged by phone in about 14 days, just for supervision, meeting in the car, until then covert checks on honesty and discretion as planned through unofficial forces.
Good. Please don't be sloppy on that point. Otherwise, that's all.
Captain Prillwitz stood up. May I...?
Yes, yes, you can go.

After Captain Prillwitz had left the room, the head of the office picked up the phone. My car in ten minutes, please. What? No, cancel the evening, we're driving to Berlin, this might take a while.



43 Sprelacart: Called Resopal in the West, a durable synthetic resin laminate
44 VS: Verschlusssache. Classified materials. Internal matters had to be recorded in specially registered, confidential workbooks.

The Unit Leader Reports to the Minister

Comrade Minister?
Come in, Comrade.
May I report?
Sit down and start talking.
Well, to keep it short: The worst-case scenario has occurred. We have in the operational area P...
Speak openly here.
So, we had a phrase written on the wall in Peridëis, very close to the entrance. An innocuous two-parter, just about 40 characters, because short texts are generally harder to decipher. We chose a phrase that is quite well-known in Peridëis and therefore wouldn't attract attention, but which the IM we sent for testing couldn't have known. So, this phrase was conventionally encrypted, with a good machine, the kind used at governmental and interstate levels. No toy. On the rock wall, there was a jumbled mess of letters and numbers. But what the IM delivered to us was the *decrypted* text!
How is that possible?!
We don't know. But we've known for a while that the people in Peridëis can't read or write, which somewhat limits the significance of the attempt—but everyone there understands each other without exception, including *all* languages we've tested on them. Even animals can be understood, although they have an extremely limited vocabulary and no sentence structure like we have. But you understand them. And I suspect that's the connection, why the encrypted text can simply be understood as if it weren't encrypted at all. Since I don't believe in magic, there must be some high technology there that can apparently crack the code effortlessly. In whatever way.
In other words, the Americans could take one of our encrypted messages there and just read it?
Yes, that's right, Comrade Minister. Well, not quite. You can't take anything there. Nothing at all. So, they'd have to memorize the code, and that's not so easy with meaningless letter-number sequences. Without significant effort, you can only remember about seven characters, and even that's not entirely reliable under strong distraction. Comrade Minister, you mustn't forget that entering Peridëis is each time anew accompanied by the triggering of a strong sexual release. That ties up capacities.
Alright, then I'll just send a hundred people, and I'll have a 500-character text decrypted. What's the problem?
But they, too, would need to take a break afterward—imagine how exhausted our operative was after placing this short phrase in several parts, with a physiological

release each time he entered Peridëis. He was completely unfit for duty. How do you envision this with the Americans, purely from a practical standpoint? Plus, they're very prudish!
Use that, amplify it! But above all, we need to see that this is about a fundamental issue. Classified information must *not in the slightest* become known! Is there really no way to protect ourselves?!
Yes, there is. Encryption methods where each individual letter is encrypted with a new key character that is used only once. Infinitely long key sequences with a good...
Yes, yes, yes, spare me the technical details now. So, there's a theoretically secure encryption method?
Yes. On your orders, I consulted with the Central Cipher Office[45]. The mathematicians say that with such a method, all that's left is noise, from which nothing could be deduced, even with future conceivable methods. Not even with future conceivable computing technology.
Absolutely?
Absolutely! That's what they told me.
How does that work? You can get more detailed now.
Well, let's write down the alphabet. Below it, we write the position each character holds in the alphabet. And of course, we need a key, let's say it's a "C". Like this:

Alphabet:	–	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
Position:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Key: C

Suppose you want to encrypt the word "Ape". Our key, in this example "C", is the third letter in the alphabet. This means each letter of our text to be encrypted must be shifted three positions to the right in the table. It's actually quite simple.
Look up the letter "A" in the alphabet above. Its value is 1. Adding the key's value, 1 + 3 = 4. The table shows that 4 corresponds to the letter "D". For "P", it's 16, so 16 + 3 = 19, which is "S". This gives us "DS" so far. The final letter "E" has a value of 5, and 5 + 3 = 8, which is "H". So, the encrypted text is "DSH".
Clear so far?
Yes, but how do you encrypt the letter "Y"? Shifting three places to the right goes past the table's end.
Keep counting, looping back to the start: three places past "Y" is "A".
Got it. And decryption?
Subtract 3 from each letter in "DSH". Done.

45 Central Cipher Office, German: Zentrales Chiffrierorgan = ZCO, Department XI in the Ministry for State Security with a good 500 employees, most of them mathematicians. After the end of the GDR, some of them got well-paid jobs in NATO, West German government agencies and private companies.

Is that secure?
No. That'd only give 27 combinations. You could brute-force it or analyze letter frequency and so on. It gets interesting when the key is longer than one character. A five-character key, with our small alphabet, would mean 27 to the power 5, or 1,438,907 possibilities.
Damn! How's it done practically?
Suppose the key is "CATYL", …

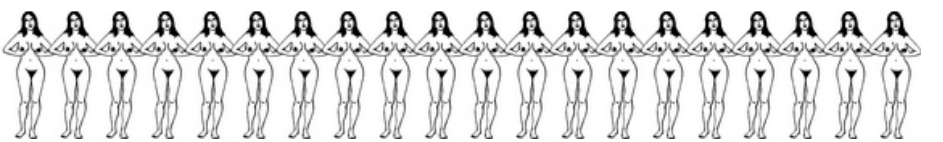
Alphabet:	**– A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**
Position:	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

Key: CATYL

…then the first character of the text to be encrypted is encoded with "C", the second with "A", the third with "T", the fourth with "Y", the fifth with "L", the sixth with "C" again, the seventh with "A", and so on, cycling from the start. To further enhance security, additional tweaks can be introduced, agreed upon for all encryption machines for a set period. For instance, a specific key sequence order —say, not 1-2-3-4-5-1-2-3-4-5-1-2-3-4-5 and so forth, but 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1, or even entirely random. This vastly increases the number of combinations and adds another layer of security: even if someone obtained the keys, they'd still be insufficient to decrypt the text.
So, we're to use this method with an infinitely long key? If I understand correctly, not just five reused keys, but each character encoded with a new key. Isn't that awfully cumbersome?
You can use punched tape rolls; up to 400 keys per meter of paper are possible. Distribute them in sufficient quantities by courier in advance, and the effort stays manageable. Or use modern digital storage—computer tech. But the transition will be complex, as all encryption devices must be replaced and personnel retrained. Unless only the devices' internals are swapped, keeping operation largely the same. That's partly feasible and would conceal the complete overhaul of the encryption method. Some devices, though, must be replaced outright.
The current state is untenable. Do you consider the effort justified, given the discovered vulnerability of existing methods?
Yes, Comrade Minister. I currently see no other method as secure, since we can't rely on known variables.
Then it must be done. I'll consult with the Central Cipher Agency. Thank you for now. Your discovery is invaluable! I'll think of a small token for your unit to honor it. You can return to your post; this matter is closed for you. And remember: not a word to anyone!
Of course, Comrade Minister!
May I be dismissed?

Out you go!

As the head of Object P left the office of the Minister for State Security, the Minister glanced at his watch and picked up the phone. “Hello? Try to reach the head of the Central Cipher Office and summon him for tomorrow at 08:00. If he’s unavailable, visit him at home. Cancel all other appointments for tomorrow. What? No… don’t cancel *that* one, reschedule it. Earliest possible slot. One more thing: until further notice, encrypted telex communications are restricted to messages up to SECRET only. Issue this order as TOP SECRET via courier to all units. Execute immediately, completion report to the duty officer by 24:00. Log the order with its number in the book. Thank you.”



Peridëis

Flashing

So they ran, Alisha and Tim, day after day along the azure paved path. Sometimes the trees stood close together, sometimes they opened up to reveal the tall cliffs on either side of the path, and time and again, Alisha marveled at the beauty of Peridëis. At times, colorful meadows lined the path, at times streams crossed it, and sometimes the path ran directly alongside a stream. They spent the nights lying directly on the ground, covered only with a thin cloth, for the nights in Peridëis were never cool. And Alisha felt no fear at night, perhaps because the moon provided just enough light to check on things if needed. Or maybe it was the liberated and joyful mood that had completely taken hold of her.

After several days of wandering, Alisha sat one morning on the bank of a small stream, eating her breakfast and watching Tim as he washed himself, completely naked, in the stream. He wasn't particularly muscular—his muscles hinted at strength, but not overtly. His buttocks and thighs were firm, without an ounce of fat; you could see that clearly when he bent over. He had a slight bit of softness around his belly, but it suited him. A man like that would surely find a wife, especially with such a sharp mind and so much skill and experience. How could someone like him endure celibacy? Out of consideration for him, Alisha had started to avoid unnecessarily provocative behavior and took advantage of unobserved moments for her own relief. It was almost cruel how Peridëis stirred desire in her loins that couldn't be put to practical use. She found some compensation in the fact that Tim helped her with her milk, which was equally pleasurable whether he worked his magic with his fingers or his lips. The latter, though very intimate, they had permitted for practical reasons, in all propriety, of course, but it always sent a shiver of delight through Alisha when Tim's warm lips closed around her areolas and nipples. And more shivers of delight followed. Admittedly.

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Alisha's right hand slowly wandered, bit by bit, to her throbbing lap. The opportunity was perfect, as the stream's bank allowed her to sit comfortably with her legs dangling down. She pushed the front slit of her skirt slightly aside. Unfortunately, there was no tree at her back to lean against, but that didn't matter. She spread her legs a bit wider on the ground. Her left hand slipped under her dress, parting the folds that covered her entrance when she wasn't expecting visitors. Meanwhile, the middle finger of her right hand glided to the hidden bell clapper and began to make it swing with rapid vibrations. Alisha's gaze grew fixed, locked on Tim, hoping to reach the releasing pulse in just a few moments.
But: Oh no! - Tim turned around. Alisha had been so close to release, but Tim seemed to instantly grasp what was tormenting her and hesitated, standing still. Perhaps he hoped Alisha would make those final tiny movements with her finger, but she didn't. What he failed to notice was that his penis had risen to its full size. And as he stood there, naked, now fully facing her with his rigid shaft, something overcame Alisha. Slowly, almost absentmindedly, she stood up, leapt down to him by the stream, pressed Tim down onto the slope with her body, and with a single motion, enveloped his manhood with her womanhood, riding him until she came after a few moments.
Even as the final tremors coursed through her lap and the hot waves still surged through her body, she realized with horror that Tim, too, had succumbed to the madness of lust and was now convulsing beneath her.
What had she done! Had he spilled his seed? Right now? In this very moment?

There was no denying it; she felt the flow deep within her vagina.
Alisha collapsed fully onto Tim, weeping and whispering: I didn't mean to, I didn't mean to, please forgive me...
Even so, her lap still enveloped what filled her inside, pressing tightly against his body to keep it that way.
It took a moment, then Tim's hand gently reached around the back of Alisha's head, stroking her neck hairs. It's not so bad, he said. I didn't do it myself, after all. I think it might count more as a service to you than as my own satisfaction.
But your sperm? Alisha asked. Your essence! Aren't you forbidden from losing any of it?
I probably spilled about half of what was there, Tim said. But in return, I now roughly understand how the men here in Peridëis prevent spilling.
How? Alisha asked. Your sperm doesn't flow out, and you still have an orgasm? You did have one, didn't you?
Yes, Tim replied, a very beautiful one, even.
Alisha blushed.
Yes, Tim continued, but after a moment, I was able to block the sperm's path. Halfway. Almost. Some of it must have stayed inside me. And it still felt pleasurable. A different kind of pleasure.
Then it hit Alisha: Right, you told me about that. And when you suppress the outflow, does it feel the same?
I don't know. It didn't fully work. It feels different, more intense and much longer, and it pulsed more often and for longer. But the urge to release remained despite the stronger pleasure, and that's why, in the end, my seed still flowed into you. Only at the very end. And something else is strange: I still desire. I could probably even go again fairly soon.
That'd probably interest some women, Alisha remarked. Still, it's kind of a rip-off.
For the women?
Yes.
Why, though? Tim asked. I've never understood that. The women here in Peridëis demand that men actually release into their womb and take it as an insult if he holds back his sperm. Yet there's no physical reason for it; the women don't need the sperm. For anything! And if unsatisfied women become unbearable over time, it's due to the lack of satisfaction, not the sperm.
Interesting question, Alisha said, but it also has a *meaning* when a man releases into a woman. And that's not trivial. At least not for women. There's a difference between a man fully giving himself to a woman and holding something back. It's like sex without undressing, like living together without marriage.
Hm.
But there's more, Alisha mused. When a man here in Peridëis releases his sperm,

doesn’t he lose, so to speak, life energy?
Yes. Far more dramatically than if he avoids ejaculation.
And through the breastmilk, he gains new life energy?
Exactly.
Then the case is clear, Alisha concluded. By releasing into the woman, he not only elevates her significance, but she also binds him to her. A kind of symbiosis: You receive reliable pleasure and life energy through me, but I ensure you can’t leave me, so you stay and care for me, ensuring you get reliable pleasure and life energy. A closed circle. But if he holds back his essence, his bond is much weaker. If he ran away, he’d get much farther. Even if that doesn’t practically matter, the symbolic level, the level of meaning, remains.
Interesting thought, Tim replied, especially since sex in the mundane world also serves to bond partners.
Come, let’s have breakfast and then continue our journey, Alisha changed the subject, because it would have been fulfilling for her (quite literally!) if Tim had freely released into her womb without restraint. Finally, she lifted her lap, freeing his penis from her vagina.
So they ate breakfast in peace, Alisha gave him plenty of life energy from her breasts, as he deserved (she had decided not to be ungrateful), and then Alisha thought they would continue immediately.
No, Tim said, we have one more thing to take care of. Come, let’s head to the cliffs at the valley’s edge!
He instructed Alisha to leave all their belongings by the path, and so they both veered off the trail toward the tall cliffs that lined the valley on either side. They didn’t have to go far, as the valley here was perhaps only a hundred meters wide, and given the dizzyingly high cliffs, they were essentially in a deep gorge. But because the sun always stood directly overhead, the gorge didn’t feel narrow and was always brightly and cheerfully lit.
The cliffs were overgrown with flowering climbing plants, and Alisha even spotted vines (excellent ones!). The rocks were repeatedly pierced by caves and passages, as if they were Swiss cheese. Tim entered one of the larger caves, and Alisha followed close behind. Tim had pulled one of those strange torches from his backpack, the kind found in Peridëis that ignited themselves. He removed the cork from the top of the torch, and sure enough, it flared up, giving them light.
There are countless caves in Peridëis, Tim commented as they ventured perhaps a hundred meters into one of the passages, and in these caves and tunnels, there are fabulous things and strange creatures.
Alisha felt a shiver of unease.
Tim laughed. Don’t worry, we’re not going any deeper. We’re here for something else.
Tim now approached a niche in the cave wall where something sparkled oddly.

He picked up a stone from the ground and struck it against the wall where the glittering was visible. He did this several times, with force. Twice, sparks even flew. In this way, he broke off a small, pebble-sized piece from the wall. He showed it to Alisha.
Alisha examined the broken-off piece but couldn't see anything special. It was a crystal, pretty enough, certainly, with a dull golden sheen, but it didn't seem to be gold—just some mineral.
What is it? she asked.
One of the great secrets of Peridëis! Tim replied. You often find these gold-glimmering crystals in Peridëis. It's fool's gold. In the past, people used it as flint. Fool's gold has always been seen as a magical stone, and medieval alchemists considered it the "philosopher's stone," the base material for making gold. Others believe it's an energy stone that amplifies the power of other magical stones. Here in Peridëis, this mineral is truly magical. The inhabitants of Peridëis never touch fool's gold, at least not willingly. Among other things, it has a kind of location memory. I told you that Peridëis instantly transports you back to your entry point if something happens to you that's unbearable.
That emergency rescue thing?
Yes, exactly. In such cases, you always end up where you entered Peridëis—the entry point. Depending on which entry point you came through, as there are many. With these crystals, you can do something similar. Take a crystal to another place, hold it in your hand, and vividly imagine the place where you got it—and Bam! Sulfur stench, green flash! You're there. Come on, let's try it now!
Tim stuck the burning torch into the gravelly ground, and they both headed back to the cave's entrance. Deep in the passage, the flickering glow of the torch was still visible.
Alright, Tim said as they were back out in the valley, pressing the gold-shimmering crystal into Alisha's hand. For its size, it had a notable weight, making it feel intriguing in her hand.
Alisha leaned against a nearby tree and glanced back into the passage, where the flickering torchlight was visible in the darkness. Then she closed her eyes and focused her thoughts on the spot where Tim had broken off the crystal.
Green flash! Thunderclap! Sulfur stench! A tremendous force seized Alisha... and it was done. Alisha stood right in front of the rock inside the cave, the burning torch slightly to her side. When she shrieked, it was already over. From the entrance, she heard laughter—not malicious; Tim seemed delighted, like a mischievous boy who'd shown her something spectacular.
But something was off. Alisha looked down at herself.
She was completely naked! And the golden crystal was no longer in her hand.
Well, how about that. But Tim was already jogging toward her cheerfully, miraculously holding her dress in his left hand. When he reached her, he also

presented the crystal in his right hand. If you ever need to undress quickly, this is the way, he laughed. With this kind of transport, only your very self is taken along; since your clothes aren't you, they stay behind. Just like the fool's gold crystal. It's the same with that emergency escape. And you already experienced that when entering Peridëis—only your very own body is transported, nothing else, not even makeup or a fake nose.
Fantastic! Alisha commented. And as she went to put her dress back on: Uh, by the way, the dress has a tear. Damn. Where did I rip it?! Was that just now?
I hope it wasn't me, Tim said. The dress was hanging on the tree you leaned against. Maybe I pulled it off too carelessly. Honestly, I'm sorry!
What a shame, Alisha mourned, turning the dress over in her hands. But maybe it was me, in the moment I was whisked away.
Alisha turned the dress this way and that. There was nothing to be done, and they didn't have needle and thread either. Alisha climbed back into the dress. Very carefully.
Tim helped her get dressed. It's not that bad, he said. We'll just have to get a new one.
Alisha realized that in Peridëis, this wouldn't be a problem—and even naked, she wouldn't freeze or look embarrassing. As she thought of the other beautiful dresses she'd seen in the tavern, her mood visibly improved.
Only the Peris and us visitors can flash to another location like that, Tim added now. Not the regular inhabitants.
I'd love to have something like that in real life, Alisha said to Tim.
Torn clothes?
Alisha laughed. No, magic like that witch's leap just now.
Isn't this real life? He grinned. How do we know what we know? What gives you certainty that something is real?
Alisha paused. A tough question. The most ordinary dream could sometimes feel real without her noticing. And on the other hand, she'd sat on the toilet in a half-sleep at night, unsure whether she could let go, afraid she'd wake up in a wet bed the next moment.
Tim had been watching her expression. I know, he said softly, we could be in some kind of virtual reality here, but who assures us that outside, we're not just some complex computer program or something else entirely...
Alisha thought it over.
Peridëis is real, Alisha said finally, looking Tim in the eyes. I'm living the fairy tale, I can feel the fairy tale, I can touch the fairy tale, so the fairy tale is real. Everything else is unimportant. Irrelevant. The only meaning of life is life itself. There's no other. And this is real life, and I only have one. Dead matter doesn't concern me when it comes to what truly touches me.
Tim was genuinely taken aback. So you honestly don't think Peridëis could be a

virtual world or something like that? Maybe created by an alien civilization? Or a second species that once lived alongside us on Earth? Or that everything is just an illusion? You know, all those scientifically halfway plausible things?
Why bother? If I can't decide it, what's the point of doubt? It only ruins my life. Like mistrust can destroy the best relationship. And Peridëis is beautiful, and I won't let anyone ruin Peridëis for me!
Alisha had genuine tears in her eyes.
Sorry, Tim murmured, your view has something to it. Can you accept that my worldview is... more complicated, if I also just accept yours?
I can, Alisha said firmly. But it's hard for me to accept nonsense like virtual realities in the face of such tangible realities...
It's not nonsense!
If I peed on your head right now, you'd be wet. Very real wet! Is that female illogic?
Tim laughed. Alright, alright, I'll shut up.
And? Alisha asked.
What, and?
What do we do now?
Oh, right, Tim replied. I'm not quite done. The crystal doesn't move us forward but can be very useful if something happens. We'll take two crystals from this place, one for you and one for me. If we occasionally toss out the old crystals and get new ones, we'll always have a place within reachable distance to escape to or meet up at if we get separated. Whether we walk back there or use the flash. Though, strictly speaking, I don't even need a crystal.
Strictly speaking? Don't play the hero now, Alisha said. Why not?
A crystal is more for beginners. It helps, but it's not strictly necessary. We'll practice later how to do it without. Remember that the locals can't do this, and since we're witches to them, they don't call it "flashing" or anything, but "witch's leap." Don't let them catch you doing it—they're mostly afraid of what they don't understand.
Yeah. And?
What, and?
How does it work without a crystal?
It's not much different. You need to know the destination very well, close your eyes, and imagine the place as vividly and detailed as possible. And wish intensely to get there instantly. Boom, you're there. But you really have to practice that precise visualization, and you obviously can't go to places you've never been. And if someone's meanly changed something at the destination, it won't work anyway. At best, you'd land somewhere nearby in that case.
Yikes, can anything go wrong?
No. It's like throwing a ball in a mountain range—even if the intended destination

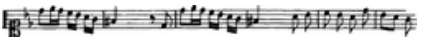
was a slope, it keeps traveling until it lands somewhere stable. So you won't end up in a fire, inside a wall, or on top of a tree, but always on safe, solid ground. And that's why, unlike you, I don't strictly need a little stone.
But I want one anyway.
I'm doing it, aren't I? Just to be nice.
Alisha laughed: Thanks, I really feel better with it.
Tim chipped another crystal from the rock wall.
Alisha stepped closer to watch him.
Be careful, Tim said. When I hit the stone, splinters sometimes fly around.
Alisha moved behind Tim so she could look over his shoulder.
Say, Alisha said, couldn't we chip out a prettier crystal? Mine's just an ugly lump compared to those nice big crystals still in the wall.
It works just as well, Tim replied, pausing. And if it's rounder, it scratches less in your pocket than if it's angular.
But I want one of those over there, Alisha said, pointing at some truly beautifully formed, silvery-gold shimmering crystals that were almost perfect cubes, each about two centimeters on a side. I want one of those, she said.
But honestly, Tim replied, it's just...
I really want those! Let's take one.
And who's doing the work?
You!
Tim groaned with a laugh. Come on, seriously, he made one last attempt, a thousand tiny crystals sparkle so much more than one big one!
Please!
Tim gave up and went to the spot Alisha had pointed to. It took him quite a while to manage to chip out one of the cube-shaped large crystals without it shattering.
There you go! Tim handed Alisha the crystal but quickly slipped a random, smaller, roughly rounded fragment into his own pocket.
Thank you! Alisha said. It's really pretty. And she added, giving Tim a kiss on the cheek: The next milk will be extra special, just wait.
Tim had long forgiven her. They both headed back to the entrance and set off again. Out of the underground passage, onward through the magnificent valley.

But Alisha hadn't yet taken in the beautiful landscape passing by: Why did you chip the fool's gold out of the wall instead of just picking it up from the ground? There were plenty of those crystals lying around in the passage, no effort needed.
With loose crystals, you can't be absolutely sure they belong to this place, Tim replied. They could've been brought here from somewhere else—or washed, blown, or whatever. In that case, it wouldn't work because you'd be imagining the wrong place.
That made sense to Alisha.

You don’t have to keep holding your crystal, Tim said, glancing at Alisha.
Alisha grumbled. But Tim was right. The dress had hidden inner pockets. Must’ve been tailored by a man, Alisha thought. Women sometimes forgot practicality for aesthetics, always with jewelry and almost always with clothes. In the mundane world, dresses and skirts basically never had pockets to hold even a tissue or a tampon, let alone keys or a wallet. It was infuriating. Alisha slipped the crystal into one of her pockets. It bulged the dress outward and poked a bit.
Out loud, Alisha said: But if I end up with a proper collection of crystals, how do I keep track?
If you’re holding a handful, it depends on which matching place you imagine. Otherwise, you just have to stay organized, or you’re out of luck. And don’t clutter yourself with crystals.
What’s that supposed to mean?
Come on, women always want every possible safety net at once, but if you chip out a crystal every ten meters, first, we’ll never get anywhere, and second, you’ll soon lose track. Not to mention you couldn’t possibly remember all the associated places. No. It’s better to just toss out the crystals from earlier stops. That way, we won’t accidentally end up at two different places, and that’s a greater safety than having countless options at once.
Oh, how practical logically thinking men can be! Alisha teased, batting her eyes dramatically. Now it was Tim who stuck out his tongue.
Alisha laughed.
Uh, Alisha scratched her thigh and stopped. Speaking of which...
You’d rather have a smaller crystal without sharp edges, right?
Alisha laughed again. Yes.
Thought so.
Tim rummaged in his pocket. And when his hand emerged, behold: two centimeter-sized, rounded pieces, with countless tiny crystals sparkling in the sunlight.
You thought of it from the start?
Wasn’t hard. You just got seduced because it was your first time.
Tim gave Alisha one of the two pieces. After she tucked her crystal away (it didn’t pinch or bother), she turned the pretty cube over in her hands for a long time. Kind of a shame, though, she said. It’s beautiful.
You’ll see even prettier ones, Tim comforted her, and the sparkle of lots of tiny crystals isn’t to be scoffed at either.
True.
Oh, one more thing, Tim said. The rounded pieces have another advantage. If you ever fall into someone’s hands.
Who?
Doesn’t matter who. If something like that happens, you can hide the crystal in a

body cavity if they strip you. Use the butt, even if it sounds weird.
Alisha looked at Tim questioningly.
Tim added: The mouth is fine for short moments, but it's rarely closed for long. Armpit's good too, but you have to be careful when moving or if you can't freely choose how to move. And the vagina's the same as the mouth.
???
Don't forget where you are. You excite men just as much as men will drive you wild.
Alisha blushed.
And by the way, you were right.
What? What do you mean?
I mean about me taking a crystal too. You know, the witch's leap without a crystal takes a lot of concentration, and neither concentration nor memory is particularly reliable in humans. Sometimes it doesn't work at all or not right away, and even more often, you don't land exactly where you want but just somewhere nearby. Especially when you're excited or really distracted. It must've been different for the creator of Peridëis, or at least the Peris seem to be much better at it.
Can they travel to places they don't know at all?
No, not that I know of. But if a satyr was chasing me to... uh... from behind, I'd never have the concentration needed.
Alisha giggled. Already happened?!
No, Tim grumbled. But I heard about a Peri whose castle was being burned down by some people. Everything was gone! And she calmly told them, "We'll meet again." And Boom! she was gone, and Boom! she appeared in the village of those people, where only the women were left, since all the men were at her castle. The Peri chased those women out of the village—not too far, but gone is gone. Then, when the village was empty, she destroyed their entire stockpile of milk. The dried milk and women's butter they'd collected over a long time. You can imagine how pale the men were when they returned. Women gone! Milk stockpile gone! And the Peri stood on a rock, laughing at them loudly. It wasn't until the next day that she Boom! went to the women and allowed them to return to the men in the village. I'd love to be able to do that!
That Peri was still pretty fair to the men, Alisha said.
Still, the milk stockpile was gone. That's like burning money back home. Or the entire harvest. And maybe this story gives you an idea why we'd better not reveal ourselves as witches. Because that's what we are to the regular folks here.
Can we do more stuff like that?
Sure, a few things.
I'll bear it with grace, having become a witch, even if the locals can't stand it, Alisha replied.

Tim laughed. What do you mean exactly?
The girl with the biggest boobs in our class, who had all the boys eating out of her hand, was always whining that she didn't want to be defined just by her boobs. Meanwhile, she had nothing but straw in her head, that goat, and nothing else to offer. Some people just complain no matter what they have. For my part, I think the abilities I've gained here are awesome. Period.
Me too. Period.



The Little Town

Alisha and Tim had only wandered another hour along the azure paved path when, after a curve, a town suddenly stood in their way. Well, calling it a town would be an exaggeration; even the word "village" would be too much. It was a tiny but very charming hamlet, built into a jumble of small rocks. A gate blocked the path, and the azure paved path led directly into this gate. Bright red walls barred access to the town wherever there were gaps between the rocks. The wall wasn't particularly high, maybe a little over two meters. And as unevenly as it was built, one could easily find a spot to climb over it comfortably. On each red wall segment between two rocks, there was always a stylized depiction of a woman holding out her breasts to the viewer, her legs forming a large "O." Above the town wall, numerous tiny houses peeked out, each painted in a different vibrant color and each in a different whimsical shape. Nothing was straight, and every imaginable form was present—even shapes that made one doubt the practicality of the house.

Alisha's mouth fell open, and she stopped. My goodness, it's beautiful! she breathed. You know, this is what's missing back home. Colors! Shapes! And decorative elements! Our cities are gray, our villages are gray, and decorations on houses only exist where they haven't yet fallen off due to age. Or just straight lines, completely smooth surfaces, and right angles. All the playfulness is completely absent from houses back home. You know, friends of my parents once inherited a house in a village. The courtyard and driveway were paved with fieldstones. Really neat, they loved it. But guess what happened? The neighbors offered to help them concrete over the driveway. So it would finally look proper, they said. Proper!
Alisha shuddered.
Then she continued. The *normal* people! Norm! Proper means everything follows an order, everything has to be basically the same, the great equalizer. But if you meet a so-called dropout, they're just like all the other dropouts. Differently the

same. They're all conformists because they only accept what fits their own norm. Or what they think is their norm. But this here (Alisha gestured toward the little town ahead) is truly *different*.
Let's just go, Tim said.
Is there anything I need to watch out for? Alisha asked, now a bit anxious.
No, not really, Tim replied. You're just you, and someone else is someone else; you're traveling through the land to pay your respects to the Peris, and I'm showing you the way. That's all. If in doubt, there's a saying here: *It doesn't matter what the woman's name is, as long as she gives good milk.* More bluntly: Offer what you have to offer, and people will eat out of your hand.
You mean I should...
Yes. What was it with the girl who just jiggles her breasts, and all the boys fall at her feet? Here, you get the logical extension of that. No woman works because she gets everything anyway. Offer your breasts or lift your skirt, and they forget what they wanted before. Plus, we have a strangely strong effect on the people here. Us visitors from the mundane world. From outside.
Every woman from outside?
Yes, every one. Again: *every*. The men too, by the way.
Why does that make me wet? But what if I don't like the men and still need something?
You sound pretty unconvincing, considering your very aroused constant state right now...
Alisha laughed. Okay, fine, but theoretically.
No idea. Close your eyes? You'll have to weigh whether you'd rather wait. But for now and this little town ahead: If you prefer, I can answer for you if people ask questions.
Yes, I'd prefer that. I'm a bit scared.
I'll handle it. The main thing is just one rule: Never say you're from outside.
What do they do with witches?
Oh, like everywhere: It depends. If you have power or they want something from you, they'll grovel at your feet, and I mean seriously. But if you stumble, you'll be spat on, chopped up, or burned.
???
Noooo, don't panic, you're a witch, you can just escape, remember? Witch's leap. Flash. Flee.
Alisha nodded. A moment later, though, she asked: What about the poor women who are innocently burned?
Men and women, Tim corrected. Then he continued: It doesn't happen that quickly, and don't forget, in Peridëis, there's neither death nor unbearable pain. We visitors would escape, and that would actually be the real goal of the fire—to get us gone. An innocent local, though, would leap out of the fire furious or pass

out immediately. But nothing happens to them. And then the perpetrators have to fear them afterward because they'll pay them back. And their friends will too. And a debt would need to be settled. That regulates things a lot. Denunciation and slander only thrive where the denouncer or slanderer has nothing to fear. But here, they do. Still, the people aren't vengeful. A fight that breaks out today over a situation can turn into best friendship tomorrow. It's just that they're *afraid of us*, and you'd have to provide a lot of proof that you're not a danger to them. That might work if you live here for a long time, but even then, there's an uneasy respect for you. But back to us, standing here: Even if you don't have a crystal and can't do the witch's leap yet, you'd be yanked out at worst if things got truly unbearable for you. That'd just be annoying, and you'd have to avoid the area for a while as long as they still remember you. But that's it.

But what does unbearable mean? Why aren't you yanked out when things just get unpleasant?

Honestly, what kind of life would it be without highs and lows? If you only eat from a gourmet shop, eventually, it's no more special than cafeteria food. Just expensive with no benefit. Humans don't judge absolutely but by comparison. If all kids are well-behaved, a kid who just says "Bleh!" is considered bad. If every inconvenience is kept from you, you start crying when a little flower gets bent. But the real point: You don't feel any better overall. I mean, people seek adventure, thrills, color, excitement. Nothing's more boring than stuffy, monotonous boredom.

The gray...

Yeah, the gray.

The horror.

Horrible.

Alisha laughed.

The right balance is a tricky question, though, Tim added. It can be different every time. I once worked as a counselor at a kids' summer camp. It was nice because they gave me time off for it.

Here or outside?

Outside, with the Stasi—er, the kids were from employees. Don't joke around, they were perfectly normal kids, in every way. So, we did a night hike. A summer camp without a night hike is no camp at all. I was assigned to be a ghost in the woods. The camp leader had given the guideline to be extra gentle with the really young kids and, if necessary, "reveal" ourselves as ghosts if they got too scared. Like, "Hey, it's just us, and real ghosts don't exist!" That kind of thing. We did that, and they were thrilled. But with the older ones, the 13- and 14-year-olds, we were told to go all out, and not to hold back with the girls either, or they'd complain afterward that it was just for wimps. We did that too, and they were thrilled. Afterward.

You jerk, I believe every single word!
Tim laughed. And the moral of the story: No peaks without valleys, there ain't no glory.

The two walked to the town wall of the little hamlet, where they saw a gate. It was a blue gate with a bright red woman painted on it, holding out her breasts to the viewer.
Hey! Tim called, because the gate was firmly closed. Though "gate" is a bit of an overstatement; it was only wide enough for two people to pass through side by side, and even then, with difficulty.
How do wagons get through here? Alisha asked.
What wagons?
Carts, carriages, and so on.
There's no such thing in Peridëis, Tim replied. You walk, or you get pulled by a slave in a tiny cart, or at best, you ride some lazy animal. Anything else is for witches only.
But...
Shhh. Tim put a warning finger to his lips. Alisha understood immediately. They could be overheard here.
And why don't they build wagons? Alisha whispered, her curiosity too strong.
They break, Tim whispered back. There's no electricity here, and any mechanics break down quickly. You search the woods for useful items that grow there, but even those don't last long. Only artistic things that aren't heavily stressed, or anything soft and flexible, hold up decently. But nothing hard.
And this gate? It's hard and has mechanics. Or aren't the hinges and latch mechanics?
Tim chuckled. Stuff like that grows here. Like ornamental gourds.
What?!
No, not really. As far as I know, there are trees here that don't have annual rings in their trunks but are built up like snails. The outer layers are very soft when fresh. People just peel off as much as they need, cut it to shape, and wait until the stripped wood hardens like bone. That's what they build with. Many men are dedicated craftsmen. Even smaller houses are made from these panels. Though not everything about it is beyond doubt. These panels are very light, and if there were storms here, entire settlements would probably just get blown away. The houses here last maybe three or four years, but I think it varies a lot.
Hey! Tim called again.
I can whistle with two fingers, Alisha said.
Go for it.
Alisha let out a shrill whistle with two fingers.

A few moments later, the gate opened. It didn't even have hinges; it was simply slid aside.
How do you make that sound I just heard? A small, colorfully speckled man with a jester's cap and bells had opened it for them.
Alisha shrieked but quickly clapped a hand over her mouth in shock. She had seen this little man before! Her heart pounded in her throat. Would she be betrayed now? Oh, nonsense, the little man had been outside himself. In the mundane world.
We want to come in! Alisha said with a firm voice.
Didn't I tell you to go find something else? Nobody wants you looking like that, so buzz off!
I'll show you!!! Alisha was genuinely furious and grabbed for the cheeky little man, who swiftly slipped away and ran off, screaming loudly.
But at least the gate was open now.
What was that? Tim asked. I heard the voice, but I only vaguely saw something.
A little man, Alisha replied, but *I* saw him clearly. And it's the second time—once back home, and now here. Back then, he insulted me the same way, saying no one's waiting for armpit hair, sagging breasts, and undyed hair.
Then he was lying, Tim replied. Just as the best possible conformity to the so-called norm is idealized back in our mundane world, here it's uniqueness that's admired. That's why there's hardly anything like fashion here. If people here imitate something, it's more for the practical idea behind it. Otherwise, people here are creative, with a motto of *live and let live*. That applies to hairstyles too, anywhere on the body, and especially to breasts. Yours, by the way, have gotten noticeably fuller since we've been here.
Really? And they don't sag as much anymore?
Really. But whether they stand firm or sag isn't the point here. There are no little-girl breasts here; there are only real women's breasts, bursting with milk. And back home, it's not like men only go for boring plastic breasts. If you ask me, those are only the norm because they're so dull and don't cause offense in pictures. Because they *don't* arouse. There are indigenous cultures where it's different.
But don't sagging breasts signify age, and firm breasts fertility?
Don't milk-filled breasts signify fertility even more? And those almost always point downward.
Often. Not always.
But usually, even during pregnancy. Especially when a woman radiates the most fertility.
Fair point, but at that stage, she's already fertilized and taken. A virgin, though, isn't. She's still free.
True, Tim grumbled. But it's still only *potential* fertility, not proven. The fact

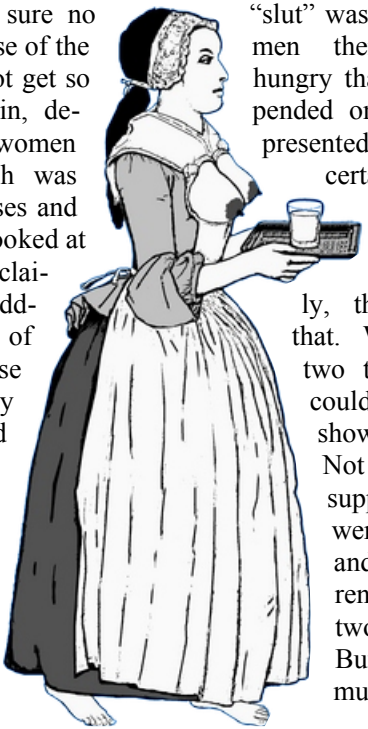
remains that sagging breasts don't just signify age, and besides, there are differences.
Tim made a gesture that made Alisha laugh.
Honestly, Alisha asked, do you like sagging breasts? It sounds like you do.
That doesn't mean I don't like the others, except those underdeveloped puberty breasts. But to answer your question: Yes. Certain ones.
Like mine? Alisha asked softly.
Yes.
Thanks.
They could stand to be a bit more...
You jerk! Alisha kneed him in the thigh.
Ow! So much for men being honest. I was just saying yours will probably fill out even more, and I'm looking forward to it, and...
Hm.
Really!
Fine.
And just by the way: *Most* men are quite inclined toward inclined breasts.
Hm[46].
But every breast is different. And that's the special charm. Here, people don't care about the public norm for breasts but go by what certain breasts stir in them. Deep in the ancient, animalistic part of their soul, not in their dry intellect. Though that applies to everything here, of course.
Alisha objected: But if instinct regulates everything, then...
...there's still compassion; that's stronger here too. And the rest is regulated... in some strange, inexplicable way... by Peridëis. It's not like everything runs perfectly here. Peridëis isn't an... ideal world, but it's like there are no overly sharp edges.

For a moment, there was silence. Then Alisha and Tim entered the little town.
How beautiful it is! Alisha exclaimed, delighted.
Alisha turned around. What she saw genuinely outraged her. Instead of taking an interest in the beautiful little town, Tim was examining the mechanics of the town gate. The door slides on something smooth! he called out. And the creator of this gate urgently needs a course in door-building or at least to think about what a gate is for. This one can just be pushed open and closed; there's not even the slightest attempt at a lock.
We did stand in front of it for a while, Alisha pointed out. Maybe it's just to keep animals out.
Or just for coziness, Tim grumbled.

46 That's true. A survey of nearly 1,400 men found 20% dislike saggy breasts, 20% were neutral, and 60% found them erotic to highly erotic.

Alisha laughed. Come on, take a look at the beautiful town. Isn't it lovely? Say something!
And indeed. The streets, or rather, alleys of the tiny little town were covered with light gravel, and on either side, small houses were squeezed between individual rocks, each house painted in a different vibrant color. All were only one story high, but the alleys rose and fell in waves, twisting and branching as the existing rocks apparently dictated. The rocks here were perhaps three meters high and wide, scattered around at roughly three-meter intervals. Not regularly, but approximately. Some were larger or smaller. From most houses, a ladder or staircase led to the neighboring rock, where sometimes an additional room had been built, but more often, there was a kind of terrace. The rocks, as so often in Peridëis, were covered with plants and flowers. Small alleys branched off irregularly to the right and left, so despite the tininess of this town, a labyrinth emerged where one felt they could get lost. And time and again, the narrow alleys widened into small squares where markets were held.
And the people! The women, like Alisha, all displayed their breasts openly, seeming to confirm what Tim had said earlier: large breasts, small breasts, narrow breasts, wide breasts, large areolas, small areolas, flat nipples, prominent nipples, short nipples, long nipples, apple-shaped breasts, lemon-shaped breasts, mango-shaped breasts—every type and form was offered for the enjoyment of the inclined observer. And not only that, it became clear that they were, like the head and hands, part of their expressive form; here they were shaken invitingly, there they swayed enticingly while walking with a life of their own, as if wanting nothing to do with the feet, here they bounced with laughter, there they swung while bending over, here they were lifted to praise themselves or their contents. In short: they were part of the bustling life. And a lively, well-noticed part of that bustling life at that.
It was a peculiar feeling for Alisha. She had been bare-breasted the entire time up to this point. Well, not just simply bare-breasted, but wearing a dress that *deliberately* left her breasts exposed. Emphasized. Drawing attention to them, not just casually left free. And the same went for her lap. That, too, wasn't simply left naked like at a nudist beach back home; women here wore their pubic area *deliberately* exposed, and the slit of the dress was designed so that, when walking or sitting, her "bear" (as her friends called it) constantly peeked out. That was still manageable, but here, *all* women did it. In variations, sure, but *all* of them! Not like at a nudist beach, where it was supposedly *not* provocative, but precisely *because* it was provocative. Throughout the whole land! And that sparked a tingling sensation in Alisha. It was somehow very enticing. Alisha didn't even consider herself particularly—what was the word—exhibitionistic, but being allowed to show herself, to tease, that was... beautiful. It was already noticeable enough that women loved to bare themselves when far from home, where no one

knew them. Why was showing off even forbidden?! Maybe because other women jealously ensured no one sharpened their weapons too much, diverting the men's attention from them. A kind of disarmament pact, where you constantly glanced left and right to make sure no "slut" was breaking the rules. But maybe it was also because of the men themselves. They were supposed to look, but not get so hungry that they bit without permission. And that, again, depended on what was considered normal, how the other women presented themselves. But the men looked, that much was certain. Alisha had once tested it with dark sunglasses and a thin T-shirt without a bra. The men always looked at the breasts first, not the face, even if they claimed otherwise. An interesting amusement! Oddly, though, women looked too, Alisha was sure of that. Why, though[47]? Whatever. In any case, those two things were surely not placed exactly where they couldn't be missed for no reason, and she enjoyed showing them off, letting everyone gawk at them. Not just like at a nudist beach, where you were supposed to practically ignore them, but so they were to be admired and praised, like intricate and valuable jewelry. Like right here! And weren't they jewelry? Nicely round and large with two strikingly colored tips, each one different. But we've been over that already. A swaying multitude! Long live diversity!



Alisha was euphoric.

The small marketplaces at the intersections and junctions were equipped with numerous seating areas but also fixed stone stalls. These were table-sized blocks, usually about two meters long and maybe a meter wide, so the merchants could comfortably display their wares. And what a variety there was! As for utilitarian items, the selection itself wasn't that large, but every cup, every plate, every chair, every rug was designed differently, all richly decorated, painted, carved, molded, woven, cut, and whatever else could be done. In short: The entire little town was one big art market. Of course, not every utilitarian item was beyond criticism if you judged it by its actual usefulness. The most beautiful cup is of little use if it's a huge, ornately decorated tankard whose thimble-sized container can barely be

47 By the way: This has been confirmed with special cameras. Even with an average décolletage, men almost always look at the breasts first, then the face, but women also pay strong attention to other women's breasts.

reached by the lips. But that didn't seem to bother the people here, and many stalls were filled with trinkets that, upon closer inspection, had no practical use whatsoever. But let's not be unfair: What use, for example, is an ordinary silk panty, sold for a fortune in perfectly ordinary lingerie shops in the mundane world? None. Exactly. And certain cars need to go straight to the shop if you sneeze too hard next to them. I mention this only so the men don't say *See!* to the women and point fingers. But these things look pretty, and that's why they sell. If you have enough money. But *that* was truly not a problem in Peridëis. The vendors practically yearned for someone to acknowledge the true greatness of their craft by taking their wares.
Where was I?
Oh yes, the market. There were, of course, also merchants offering special fruits they'd found in the forest at secret spots they'd never reveal, or even ones they'd cultivated themselves. And there were the entertainers. At one stall, Alisha and Tim stopped because the woman sitting behind it had absolutely nothing on the stone block in front of her. The woman gazed dreamily into the sky, showing no reaction.
What's this woman selling? Alisha asked.
I don't know, Tim replied. Let's just stay here for a moment.
It didn't take long before a woman approached the stall without hesitation, holding out a small vial to the woman behind it.
The woman opened her eyes.
Alisha shivered. The woman behind the stall had very peculiar eyes. You seemed to be able to look kilometers deep into them and lose yourself.
The woman behind the stall looked at the vial.
That's breastmilk powder or women's butter in there, Tim whispered.
Alisha had suspected as much but was grateful for the clarification.
Look into my eyes, the woman behind the stall said.
The customer leaned her lower body casually against the stone block and exposed herself to the gaze of the woman behind the stall.
Another shiver ran through Alisha, even from her distance, though she couldn't directly look into the eyes of the woman behind the stall.
The customer had taken on a fixed stare, completely captivated by the gaze of the woman behind the stall.
Alisha and Tim could just make out the soft but intensely and suggestively spoken words…
Wonderfull waves wend into your warm vulva...
The rest was unfortunately inaudible, as Alisha and Tim were too far from the two women[48].

48 The author is genuinely unaware of the following sentences.

But it didn't take long—only a few seconds—before the customer began breathing heavily, more and more, and finally collapsed with a moan into a powerful orgasm.
The woman behind the stall caught her with her hands and held her until the customer came to herself again.
Thank you, the customer said.
Visit me again soon, the woman behind the stall said.
And the customer went on her way.
The woman behind the stall sat back down, her gaze turning dreamily skyward again.
The woman behind the stall can make an orgasm happen just with looks and words! Alisha exclaimed, astonished.
Impressive, Tim said. That was skillful. It even got to me.
Alisha looked at him, concerned.
No, Tim said, no ejaculation, just the arousal.
It hit me too, Alisha said. I've long understood why women here don't wear panties.
Do you know what you could call what that woman does?
?
Fast food. Laugh if you want, but it's really like hunger when you don't have time for a restaurant visit. With the strong urges here in Peridëis, you need that pelvic release as regularly as food. So what do you do when you're pressed for time?
The two strolled on.
At the next corner, Alisha noticed the first stall where a woman, sitting on a stool, was expressing her breastmilk into a cup. A man stood in front of her, apparently wanting to buy this milk.
Alisha excitedly tugged at Tim's sleeve: Look, she's doing it openly on the street!
I'm more surprised we haven't seen more of this already. You'll see it a lot, Tim replied. But this kind of thing existed in the mundane world too. In China, there were women who, just like here, sold their milk openly at markets. It was believed to be good for health. At least in South China, there used to be no other milk for sale. A full cup could fetch as much as a day's wages for a common worker. It was Mao Tse-tung who banned it, which was tough for those people when it was their family's only income. In Persia, too, you could get breastmilk at the marketplace; nomadic women sold it, like here and in China, straight from the breast to prove its authenticity. And here, it's the only source of income for women, since women aren't allowed to work. Only creative work is permitted, but that doesn't really bring in much.
And I could sell my milk here just like that?
Absolutely! We even have to. Are you hungry right now?
No.

Then let's first see if we can find a new dress for you.
When they took a break and sat at an empty stone block, a man approached Alisha. It was hard to describe what was intriguing about him, but he *was* intriguing. And it was glaringly obvious that he had a strong erection at that moment. Alisha turned bright red, as it was absolutely clear that the man's erection was because of her. She felt the heat rush to her face. Wasn't the man embarrassed at all? Alisha tried not to stare at the erect penis, though it completely dominated her thoughts. And she was soaking wet, too. Alisha felt the wetness running down the insides of her legs.
Tim immediately grasped what was happening.
Your type?
I'm melting.
Why not ask him?
Are you crazy? Are you serious?
Tim took Alisha by the arm: Alisha, he said, Peridëis is designed so that you feel desire and give in to it. Since I'm forbidden from satisfying you myself, for both my well-being and yours, I'd strongly advise you to find another to satisfy you. And that man over there is offering himself right now.
No, I can't, Alisha whispered. It's not proper. You wouldn't understand as a man.
Tim looked at the stranger. She desires you. Do you like her?
Very much! Will you lend her to me?
Gladly!
Without hesitation, Tim grabbed Alisha firmly from behind, wrapping his right arm around her arms and upper body while his left arm lifted her buttocks. He pulled her onto his lap, shifting back slightly. Then Tim hiked up Alisha's skirt, grabbed her thighs, and spread them apart. Alisha's wet sex was exposed to the town and everyone around. Just her sex, not her. She herself was nestled in Tim's armpit, breathing in his scent. Tim smelled arousingly masculine.
Alisha felt a kind of passive trance. No responsibility. This wasn't her; it was him. She hadn't done anything. He was responsible. Stay still. Don't change anything. The strange thing: Alisha felt safe, held tightly and embraced by Tim. He would never abandon her. Her guardian angel, who saw deep inside her. Alisha pressed her lips to Tim's upper arm and buried her face in his armpit. It was dark; she kept her eyes closed and let him do what he thought was right.
Don't move. Don't do anything to change the moment. Was it happening? When would the guy finally come?
There! Ah! Ah! Ah! The stranger had entered Alisha without delay. Alisha moaned. Thrust after thrust. From a distance, she heard Tim say: Let your seed flow into her. I promise you her milk, a whole breast. She has good milk.
From a distance, a question came back: Promised?
From a distance, the reply: Promised!

The thrusts in Alisha grew stronger, deeper, more rhythmic; the stranger's pelvis slapped against Alisha's wet vulva. And finally, Alisha felt a wave slowly rising within her, steadily growing. Don't stop, she whispered, don't stop, don't stop, don't stop, don't stop, don't stop... and there! Her vagina clenched in a deep orgasm, gripping the stranger's penis to guide it to what he desired. And behold! As Alisha's entire vulva sent waves of pleasure through every part of her body, she felt the man rear up and, with a moan, climax too. His penis twitched, and she felt the faint pulsing of his semen flowing deep into her vagina.
Alisha breathed heavily.
The stranger breathed heavily.
And then the softening penis of the stranger slowly slipped out of Alisha's vagina. And some of his semen flowed out of her. But only a little.
Tim closed Alisha's legs, lifted her up, and laid her sideways on the large stone block so her head found a soft spot in his lap. Well, not everything in his lap was soft. His penis was hard. Poor man, he wasn't allowed to. Alisha positioned her face so her cheek rested directly against his penis. And she kissed it at least once. Poor thing. Stars swirled before Alisha's eyes. She needed a little rest. Just a little.
Say, she heard Tim ask, do you know where we can get nice clothes around here?
Over on the other side of town, but it's hard to describe how to get there. I'll take you; I like having a little break between satisfaction and drinking from the breast anyway.
What do you say? Tim tapped Alisha's head questioningly with his finger.
M-m. Alisha murmured a no without lifting her head.
The two men laughed. But not in a mean way.
Alisha dozed. And dozed a bit more. Just a bit. Only a bit.
Then the smell of roast hit her nose. And that woke her up instantly. She lifted her head to see where the scent was coming from.
There. The stranger had gotten them food. Three, well, what were they? Three... halved hollowed-out rolls, you might call them. Or dumplings? Whatever, they were filled with a kind of goulash, more meat than sauce. And each had a spoon stuck in it.
Hungry? The stranger held out one of the goulash-filled half-rolls to Alisha. No worries, he added, the better I feed you now, the better milk you'll give later. *The woman milks through her throat*, as they say, and not without reason. He laughed.
Alisha accepted the offered food. The stranger sat beside her, and so the three of them sat side by side, letting the colorful bustle of the little town pass by. The meat was well-seasoned and heavenly tender. Alisha was hungry after all, despite what she'd said earlier. It was what you'd call a ravenous silence. Everyone ate with relish, finishing with the roll, and in the end, it turned out even the spoon was edible. It tasted sweet with a slightly spicy-fruity note. Hard to describe.
Tim had plenty of water, and they shared it with the stranger, who praised its

pleasant taste.
While they sat eating, drinking, and dangling their legs, a playful banter, flirtation, and display broke out across from them between six women and a man, suddenly escalating into shrieks and laughter from the women. When Alisha looked closer, she noticed the man had seemingly been ambushed and was now wearing restraints. With great fanfare, the women pushed, pulled, and jostled him backward onto an empty stone block. One offered her lap as a pillow, while another climbed atop him.
Are you going to get hard or what? called the woman who had climbed up. Enticingly, she lifted her skirt, letting the bound man smell her sex.
But he had no time to react, as another already shouted: Let me do it! Swish! Her lips closed around his shaft, sucking it.
Not you! called the one on top again.
The other women laughed as they held the man down. But they did so in a way that ensured they didn't miss out themselves, and the poor bound man was completely covered with writhing bodies, amid flowing hair, breasts, and wet sexes. Two of them, at least, contented themselves with his shins, while their owners helped prepare the man's center for their friend.
And behold! Faster than expected, the shaft rose and swelled, adding to the merriment, and the woman perched above didn't miss her chance, guiding the erect cock into her yearning hole. Then she rode him, moaning.
The bound man gave up his resistance.
The ride continued, and the other five women had their fun too.
Are you going to come? one asked, teasing the man.
No way! he gasped. You're out of your mind!
Ooh! If your butt were accessible, I'd help things along!
The other women cackled.
Oh, you know, the teasing woman added hypocritically, there's one-two-three-four-five-six of us women. When the first is done, the second takes over, then the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth. And guess what happens after that? The first is completely recovered!
She feigned wide-eyed shock.
And then... and then... it starts all over again. You poor, poor man!
Meanwhile, the riding woman slid her lap up and down the shaft with relish, making wet smacking sounds.
Let's make a compromise, called the negotiating woman. You come, and you'll get milk for it. Fresh, high-quality milk straight from my breast, top-notch thanks to a selective diet!
You'll just screw me over in the end! escaped the bound man in jerky gasps.
It didn't look like there was much time left for negotiation.
Fine, the negotiating woman relented. You'll get your milk right now, but woe to

you if you don't let your seed flow when your cock twitches!
She lifted her breast to the bound man's mouth. He opened his lips and sucked the offered nipple into his mouth. From his mouth movements and the woman's brief sigh, it was clear he was taking what was offered. Perhaps the added stimulation made his shaft swell further or tilt to just the right angle, because the rider atop him suddenly moaned and shifted to rhythmic, thrusting, restrained movements to climb to her peak. And that was what likely pushed the man toward his own peak —his body suddenly tensed, leaving no doubt what would happen moments later.
Then the woman whose breast was in his mouth called: Enough, enough, free him quick, we want to see it all!
And behold, the rider wasn't ungrateful—she lifted her lap as fast as she could, and the man's penis slid out of her. She quickly grabbed it with her right hand and, with rapid back-and-forth movements of the foreskin, brought him to the point of no return. But once that moment passed, she held the foreskin back and only stimulated the shaft below the glans, so everyone could clearly see the man ejaculate in his pleasure, again and again. Slowing down, the rider continued the movements until the man finally calmed. His lips had released the offered breast, and he breathed heavily. Then the rider carefully wiped some of the spilled semen with her index finger, spread her labia with her left hand, and applied the semen to her clit. With rapid vibrating movements, she brought herself to climax in no time. She fell forward, letting her sex pulse as she rested on the man.
The women no longer needed to hold the man down. As the rider rose, another woman said: Alright, girls, next guy, next thrill. My turn now!
The rider gave the lying man a kiss; he used the distraction for a solid smack on her butt, and then the women moved off, apparently in search of a new victim.
The man stayed on the stone table for a moment, his shrunken cock exposed to view. Then he raised his arms and examined the restraints.
A woman called to him: Why not just wait it out here at my tavern? My beer's good! She was the landlady of a tiny tavern, not missing a chance for new customers.
Good idea, the bound man replied, got up, and followed the landlady into her tavern.
Some people had watched, while others passed by the scene indifferently, apparently with better things to do.
Alisha had watched the scene with fascination. What kind of restraints are those, and why doesn't he take them off? she asked.
You can't get those restraints off until they release themselves, Tim replied. They grow on certain trees. Freshly picked, they stay tight for about three hours if you use them to bind someone.
Want some of those restraints? asked the man who had previously spilled his seed in Alisha. I can get you some in a moment, he said. They're sold fairly fresh here

at the market—with a guarantee that they'll stay tight for at least an hour, which is plenty for most games. So, want one for your bailiff there?
Should I? Alisha asked, laughing at Tim.
Don't you dare, he replied.
Then the three of them set off for the clothing market. It wasn't far, but they never would've found the way alone! Sometimes they turned right, sometimes left, as many paths ended abruptly in dead ends. Everywhere were pretty little houses, each a different color, none built straight, no window or door the same size, all in fantastical shapes. Numerous small shops and stalls, colorful people everywhere, and several times Alisha saw couples having sex in various ways on tables or benches, chatting couples where the man caressed his woman's breast or had his hand between her thighs, or vice versa, where she pleasured his penis with her hand. One woman was kneeling, taking a man's penis in her mouth while he leaned back, enjoying the treatment. And repeatedly, there were couples where the man was suckling at her breast in different positions or milking her into a cup. But the tables didn't just hold milk in cups; no, there seemed to be beer, fruit juices, water—whatever one could wish for.
But they reached their destination faster than expected. There was so much to see, and the many dead ends made the winding little town seem larger than it really was. Finally, they stood in an alley where nothing but clothes were sold. As soon as the vendors saw Alisha's worn dress, they all rushed toward her.
Girl, one called, how can you walk around so ragged when I have the most beautiful dresses!
Girl, another shouted, look at my dresses; they'll make your breasts look like they're twice as big!
Girl, a third teased, I'll give you a dress completely free if you lend me your handsome bailiff for a quarter hour.
Alisha giggled and shouted to Tim through the noise: Are bailiffs in demand as lovers?
Tim shouted back through the din: People believe bailiff have especially potent seed. The Peris wouldn't let any other woman have it.
Sounds plausible, Alisha yelled.
Tim gestured with two fingers at his mouth, signaling how he could quiet things down.
Alisha nodded, and Tim let out a piercing whistle.
Instantly, there was silence. Apparently, loud whistles weren't common here.
Alright, that's enough, Tim said sternly. We'll look ourselves, got it?
The vendors scurried back to their shops.
To make a long story short: It was torture for the two men, which the stranger finally ended by demanding his reward. When Alisha reluctantly asked for a bit more patience, Tim offered her a spanking. Also, in case her milk flowed poorly

because she was unwilling.
The brief forced break turned out to be quite pleasant, not least because their legs were already aching. As the stranger drank his reward from Alisha's breast, she noticed for the first time that her free breast began to drip on its own. Look how well the milk flows, Alisha whispered to Tim, pointing at her free breast.
We should probably milk that breast now, Tim said, pulling a cup from his backpack. He'd barely started milking Alisha's breast when one of the clothing vendors came rushing over. You men will never learn to do it properly! she scolded. You need to do it with much more feeling—that way, you get at least twice as much!
The vendor simply took the breast from Tim's hand, massaged it briskly with practiced movements, then precisely gripped behind Alisha's nipple and gently squeezed, releasing and repeating in a steady, pleasantly slow rhythm. She only paused to circle Alisha's nipple like a clock hand. Alisha's breastmilk sprayed into the cup in hissing streams. Alisha purred.
I want to learn to do that, Tim said, watching closely.
You men don't have breasts to feel it yourselves, the woman replied, keeping her rhythm steady. When the breast seemed completely empty, the vendor kneaded it through, coaxing out more milk hidden deep in the many milk ducts. Her fingers carefully probed Alisha's milk glands, massaging them with great sensitivity... and once more, the breast reconsidered, sending a tingle that signaled more milk.
Thank you, said the stranger, who had been draining Alisha's other breast. That was well done. The breast on my side joined in right away. I'm more than satisfied, especially since I've never in my life drunk milk of such incredible strength. And it's of the finest aroma too—you could live off selling it just once a month.
The stranger stood, bowed, wished them well, and left.
I've never had sex with a man in such a way! Alisha said to Tim.
What? Greeting, sex, reward, thank you, goodbye?
Yeah, something like that.
And how does it feel?
Surprisingly good. Different, casual, but good. Maybe because it was *just* the satisfaction and nothing else. I've never had that before.
Have you ever imagined it in a fantasy?
Yeah, when pleasuring myself. Not so concretely—the man stays kind of shadowy, almost like in a fog, and he vanishes back into nothing, anonymous. That comes up pretty often.
Then you know why it happens here too. But if you have a real husband, you have to be careful to keep true intimacy just with him, or you'll lack the glue that holds the relationship together, and it'll fall apart.
You don't believe in open relationships?

No.
I don't really either. But this was different, it wasn't... truly intimate... in the real sense. And I didn't know that side of myself yet.
Except for the fantasies when you pleasure yourself.
True, except for those fantasies when I pleasure myself.
The vendor had taken the breast the man had been at. May I? There's usually still a lot in there. Pure waste.
Yes, please, Alisha said, watching as the vendor kneaded her breast and then milked it dry. Indeed, she managed to extract a surprising amount more milk.
It feels good, Alisha said. The milking, I mean. And oddly, I'm really proud that I have milk. Somehow...
That's not surprising, Tim replied. It's deeply feminine, and here in Peridëis, it has a very central meaning.
The woman gave Alisha a sly look: So, now that your breasts are empty, want to check out my dresses?
You're quite the businesswoman. Alisha laughed, not at all put off. The woman had milked her so well. Alisha was impressed not only by the amount of milk but also by how pleasant her breasts felt.
Gladly, Alisha said.
Oh, I have dresses very similar to yours, the vendor said.
And indeed! Alisha was delighted when she found a dress that wasn't just similar to hers but fit a bit better and could be tied up more effectively, which would surely be practical for wandering. Plus, it had inner buttons where the two halves of the slit skirt could be lifted and fastened. This was meant to better expose the pubic area from the front or back when being taken by a man, but the feature could be used otherwise too.
How much is the dress? Alisha asked hesitantly.
Oh, I'm thrilled that one of my dresses is being bought, even by a stranger who surely knows better! the vendor exclaimed, clapping her hands. What a joy for me! But I'd love to take some fresh milk from you if you can spare it. If you could wait maybe two hours until new milk flows? Along with the milk already collected, I'd be completely satisfied.
Now it was Tim who answered: Vendor, he lied boldly, the woman I'm accompanying was taken just yesterday in a secret ritual by an uncountable horde of wild men, more than you could count on four hands, and all spilled their seed deep inside her. Then they hung her upside down by her sex, so not a single drop of seed was lost. Understand, vendor, that the milk you just milked from her likely has a very special power. Try it! Before you give it away too cheaply!
Alisha couldn't believe her ears but bit her tongue, chuckling, and said nothing.
Oh, bailiff, the woman said, that may be, but no sex is endlessly deep.
Taste it, Tim replied.

Of course, I owe you special thanks, and I'm proud you like my dress! But I spent many weeks sewing it and use special fabrics that grow in a secret place.
Then she tapped Alisha's nipple. You mean the milk in there is magical?
Not that, Tim hurried to say. Just *very* effective. That's all I meant.
Wondrous milk, the woman mused, narrowing her eyes. Then she called for her husband and gave him a fingertip of Alisha's breastmilk to taste.
A true treasure! the vendor's husband exclaimed enthusiastically after tasting Alisha's breastmilk.
Are you agreed on the trade? Tim asked.
Deal, the vendor said quickly.
Once outside with the newly acquired dress under her arm, Tim pulled Alisha by the hand into the next alley.
Quick, take out your crystal and wish yourself back to the underground passage! Wait there at the entrance. I'll come on foot.
Why? Alisha asked, alarmed.
My mistake. I don't trust the vendor. She probably suspects you're a witch; her reaction suggested it. Better not risk it.
And you?
I'll manage. Hurry!
Tim pulled Alisha into a niche.
Alisha was getting a bit scared. She quickly pulled out the gold-glimmering crystal and gripped it tightly. Closing her eyes, she pictured the spot in the underground passage where Tim had chipped the crystal from the rock wall as vividly as possible.
A green flash! Sulfur stench! A thunderclap! A tremendous force seized Alisha... and it was done. Alisha stood right in front of the rock inside the cave, but this time, no burning torch was nearby. It was completely dark, and Alisha felt she was now naked. Tim would bring the dress; it was obvious he had *thought of that exactly*! In the distance, the bright spot of the entrance was visible. Carefully, Alisha felt her way toward it. But it didn't take long for her eyes to adjust to the darkness, and she noticed the phosphorescent green light emanating from the walls, just as she'd seen in the tavern's cellar passages. Wow! The flash had worked. She was a witch. A real witch with special powers. At least here in Peridëis.
The town wasn't far; Tim would probably be here in about an hour. Alisha wasn't worried about him; he'd handle it.
First, she found a corner, and after relieving her bladder, she lay down on the ground at a sunny spot near the entrance, looked up, and eventually dozed off.
Tim had waited for the flash, bang, and sulfur cloud, and once Alisha was gone, he scooped up her clothes and the fool's gold crystal from the ground. He gathered everything in his left hand and abruptly bolted. Tim raced through the

alleys, knocking people aside by pushing off walls with his feet, found one of the many gates leading out of the town, discovered to his surprise that it was locked, and with great elegance and the skill of a true expert, vaulted over the wall with the clothes in hand. He ran another hundred meters into the thicket of plants, made a sharp turn, and then suddenly threw himself to the ground. He slid under a dense bush, pressed his mouth into a hollow in the earth, and breathed into it to catch his breath as silently as possible. At the same time, he listened intently. For three or four minutes, he lay there completely motionless.

No, no one had managed to follow him. Now it was time to quickly get his bearings and move on.

He stood up.

Another valley opened here. Not their valley—this one was much narrower. They hadn't come from here, nor were they supposed to go this way. What was behind him? Damn, no, he'd ended up on the wrong side of the town, and the town blocked all three valleys because it sat right in the middle. Alisha was on the other side. Now what?

Tim listened. Nothing suspicious could be heard.

But what to do? Tim thought. As a bailiff, he was too conspicuous. As an agent of the Peris, he was technically immune, but at the very least, he'd be heavily delayed. In the worst case, his immunity wouldn't help against a frenzied mob on a witch hunt. A disguise would've been useful... Then Tim had an idea. In Peridëis, being naked wasn't unusual. When going to bathe in the stream, people often didn't bother with clothes and went naked, like slaves usually did, though they wore collars. Stripping completely could be a good idea—a naked bailiff wasn't a bailiff.

So Tim undressed and wrapped Alisha's new dress, the crystal, his whip, and his own clothes in Alisha's old dress, tying it with his rope. He tucked the bundled package under his arm. He found the stream and sauntered back toward the town as if coming from a bath.

The town gate toward the stream slid open easily; maybe the other gate had just been stuck, or he'd jammed it in his haste. Whatever. Tim strolled deliberately slowly within the town walls, staying close to the wall, not cutting through the town. No one came toward him. Were they all in the town's center? There! A man came running, his gaze showing he was searching for something. Tim's muscles tensed. Just one! He could handle far more than one man, but it wouldn't be wise.

The man stopped short in front of Tim. Have you seen a bailiff with a beautiful witch? he asked.

No.

Or a beautiful witch without a bailiff?

No.

If you see a beautiful witch, will you let me know?
How do you recognize one?
I don't know.
How are *you* supposed to recognize one, then?
Good point, the man said. I hadn't thought of that. Do you think I should stop looking?
Sure. It's pointless. Go home.
And what do I do there?
Tim cursed inwardly. Fine, he said aloud, you could always go to the brothel.
The brothel! The man's eyes lit up. That's better than running around, he said. And: Thanks for the advice.
You're welcome.
The man went on his way.
Tim breathed a sigh of relief and continued. He passed a few more people, including a young couple preoccupied with things other than witch hunts. But no one else asked about a beautiful witch, with or without a bailiff. No one asked about anything, to be precise. Maybe hardly anyone was still looking. The people here were forgetful and easily distracted.
Ah! There was the gate they'd entered the town through together. Without issue, Tim opened it, passed through, and closed it behind him.

Once outside the town, Tim noticed an orchard to the side that he hadn't seen when they'd entered. Near settlements, you often found especially tasty things, so a detour would surely be worth it. And sure enough, he soon found a tree growing rolls, from which Tim picked the freshest. Where to put them? Tim pulled Alisha's old dress from the bundle and tied it into a makeshift bag, stuffing the rolls inside. Nearby trees bore other delicious items, and Tim took a few samples, wrapping them in Alisha's old dress as well.
Back on the azure paved path, after maybe two hundred meters, Tim suddenly saw a chicken standing by the roadside. Well, not just standing. More precisely, the chicken was batting its eyes at him suggestively, almost indecently, and had provocatively displayed one of its thighs.
As Tim got closer, he saw more chickens in the same pose along the path.
And all of them were winking at him and flaunting their thighs provocatively.
And then one chicken even lifted its feathers slightly to reveal more of its thigh.
Ugh, Tim exclaimed, don't you have a rooster?!
But then it clicked. He calmly picked one chicken and called to it, chick-chick-chick, and lo and behold, the called chicken came running eagerly. The other chickens, now getting pushy and mean toward the chosen one, Tim shooed away. Shoo, shoo, get lost. The others strutted off, clearly offended, their clucking unmistakably indignant. Since chickens could speak a little, crude insults of low

intelligence were heard, which won't be repeated here.
Come on, Tim said to the chicken and started running back to the azure paved path. An hour's march was apparently a challenge for a chicken, as Tim had to urge the dawdling bird several times to stay close behind him.

Finally, he reached the spot where they had chipped the fool's gold crystal from the wall. When Tim arrived at the entrance to the cave, Alisha was lying on the ground, sleeping peacefully.
Tim settled beside the naked Alisha, gazed at her fondly for a while, and then blew gently in her face.
Wake up, he said. From now on, you can wear the new dress.
Oh, yes! Alisha was instantly awake. But then she paused and asked: My goodness, how was it?
Oh, nothing special. A quick sprint, some scouting, and back here. We should probably avoid the town for now; they're looking for us.
Is that bad?
No. We're real witches and can do magic. Have you forgotten?
Alisha laughed happily. It's great that we are, even if it's a shame we'll probably have to take a detour now. Am I right?
Yes. The town blocks the valley, and with these valleys in Peridëis, you rarely know where a detour will lead. Whether there are paths through the underground tunnels and caves is anyone's guess too.
And now?
I don't know. We could disguise ourselves, try at night, or find another way. I don't think it'll be too difficult.
Phew!
No, it's really not a problem. Come on, put on the new dress!
Alisha jumped up.
Her gaze fell on the chicken, which was eyeing her curiously.
What's that?
A chicken.
I can see that, but where did it come from?
Oh, I gathered some food, and the chicken offered to come along as the main course.
Alisha laughed. Voluntarily?
I couldn't verify the chicken's social status or overall situation, but it seems well-fed, looks well-groomed, and convincingly gave me the impression it came willingly. And it's of age. But shall we try on the dress first?
Yes. Instantly, Alisha forgot about the chicken.
Tim helped her put it on. The downside was that the new dress was laced up the back, making it a bit more cumbersome to put on and take off. The old dress had

buttons. But the lacing ensured a perfect fit. Alisha twirled this way and that. It's really a beautiful dress, she said. And my breasts even look a bit bigger in it, if I'm not mistaken. It's a shame the dress vendor was such a snitch.
Don't hold it against her, Tim said. Even if she'll guard your milk like a treasure, the people here are mostly afraid of anything from outside or close to it. They live in the valleys of Peridëis, don't want to climb too high on the cliffs, don't want to go too deep into the caves, have a panicked fear of the transition points, and, of course, of witches—those who come from outside, who have inexplicable powers, who have an inexplicably high capacity for thought.
Inexplicably high capacity for thought? Alisha echoed. I didn't notice the people here being dumber.
I wouldn't put it that way. "Different" is a better word. They think very immediately, but on the other hand, they're fully content in the here and now. And you saw yourself how creative and artistically gifted they are.
It's incredible what beautiful things they create! Alisha interjected.
Absolutely, Tim replied. But anything abstract isn't their thing. You don't necessarily notice it in everyday life, only when it's required. For example, they can't read or write, and you can't teach them either. At best, some spelling, and with numbers, only counting, but no arithmetic. Or technical drawings, maps, and the like—those don't exist here. You really notice it with complex concepts. They just can't grasp complicated things and therefore can't think very far ahead. That's how you can immediately tell the locals apart from us visitor "witches."
And what's the difference between Peris and witches?
For us, it's that the Peris were here before us and apparently know some secrets we don't have access to. Some say they're at least a different branch of humanity.
But how do you decide that unless there's really a secret place, a central sanctuary, that reveals the history of Peridëis? As for the locals, I'd say a Peri is one with power, and a witch is one without. They grovel to the former and chase away the latter. But they take what they can get from both. Done.
How do people grovel to the Peris? You mentioned a sanctuary; is there some kind of religion or worship? Or is it more practical?
Practically, the Peris get whatever they want anyway. So do we. But the Peris enjoy the worship. It does have religious undertones, but the actual beliefs of the natives are much more direct. Unlike the biblical story, man and woman were created as one being and then split. That's why both halves yearn to reunite and need each other. Breasts, vagina, penis, and mouth serve to enable the unifying symbiosis between men and women. The woman generates life energy within herself and gives it to the man, who uses it practically and takes on all the heavy work. This is clearly proven by the fact that a man's chest is flat and inactive, yet he has far more physical strength than a woman; that a woman produces more moisture than a man; and because both unfailingly strive to give the other what

they have in excess.
And the man's seed?
It binds him to the woman but also makes her breasts swell.
That's a pretty neat religion.
Oh, it's not so far from certain beliefs in the mundane world. Chinese Taoism, for example, has similar ideas, just bent a bit more masculine.
With fucking and sucking?
Tim laughed. No, not that, but there's still a sexual element, including sexual energies. Only it's less about real energy exchange and more about one-sided absorption and retention of energies by the man. There, too, a man shouldn't waste his seed and should draw energy from a woman's breasts, as well as her vagina and mouth. But it leans more toward abstinence, unlike here, where a man can simply reclaim lost energy, and a woman can demand his seed.
Maybe someone from China was here once?
Who knows[49]? But then they forgot a few things. I wasn't done, by the way: The belief here also says that women have larger butts so they don't get too cocky with all this and...
You jerk, you're lying now!!!
Laughing, Alisha threw herself at Tim, pummeling him with her fists. He let himself fall back, laughing too.
No, really! he said. That wasn't made up. It probably suggests that no one is infallible. And that someone's there to set boundaries.
Alisha stopped pummeling. Tim lay beneath her, still naked, as he hadn't put his uniform back on. Since Alisha's dress had spread wide, her sex now touched Tim's directly. As she paused, looking into his eyes—the man destined to remind her of her boundaries—she felt her sex fill with blood, open, and grow slick. And Tim's grew hard. A little more, and his penis would slip inside her without effort.
Sorry, Alisha said, I didn't mean to. And again: Sorry!
Alisha lifted her lap slightly to prevent the desired but forbidden from happening. Now she noticed even more how wet she'd become.
Embarrassed, Alisha said: Would you like to drink my milk? I think my breasts are full again.
Yes, gladly, Tim said simply.
Alisha lay to Tim's right, turned to face him, and offered her breast to his mouth. He took it in his hand and guided it to his lips.
Alisha closed her eyes, surrendering to the sensation flooding her body and flowing toward her nipples. Why did the thought of this man giving her a smack on the butt—or two, or three—fascinate her? Was it this man? Or was it her? Was it Peridëis? Or something more? She decided it was Peridëis. That was the simplest.

49 These claims aren't entirely wrong. Taoist alchemical teachings include such theories.

A few moments later, Alisha's right hand found its way to her lap. She couldn't help it. It just wouldn't do. Her right leg, resting atop, bent, and her middle finger slipped into the slit where her clit pressed outward. The middle finger frantically sought its target, the neighboring fingers pushed her labia aside as best they could, and the middle finger began vibrating over the tender skin of her clit. Alisha honestly tried not to let Tim notice. But she must have tensed too much and nudged him with her leg, and to top it all, the rapidly approaching orgasm was too intense for her to stifle her cry. So she gave up and let it happen, which granted her a few aftershocks before she sank into a half-daze.
Tim stroked her neck, easing some of Alisha's guilt.
When he'd drunk his fill, he said: The moment you have an orgasm, a lot more milk comes.
Really? I promise I'll try to restrain myself in the future.
Don't promise that. You wouldn't manage it, and it wouldn't be good to constantly carry a guilty conscience. It's not your problem that I live in celibacy, and it's against the nature of Peridëis to suppress desire. Besides, you let yourself go even though you were being watched. Not a great sign for your self-control.
?!
Tim pointed at the chicken, standing two meters away, watching them curiously.
Alisha laughed.
She asked Tim: How do you manage it? I don't mean the chicken, but the self-control thing.
Sometimes I don't manage at all. When it happens without my doing, I try to have the climax in a way that the seed isn't released. Like the other men here can do. And someday, I'll get it right like them. I just don't have as many chances to practice. It's contradictory to want an orgasm, not want an orgasm, have an orgasm, and then hold back the seed. But last time was a good opportunity. Still pretty botched, but I think I've figured out the trick.
Who's even supposed to check that?
Would you seriously risk it?
Alisha thought for a moment. No, she said finally. The price is worth the effort.
I think that's what the effort is about, Tim replied.
When... Alisha hesitated slightly, ...when was the last time it happened to you?
You were washing at the stream, bending far forward, and your vulva was perfectly visible, and your breasts were swaying. That's when it happened.
Should I avoid doing that...?
No. Let me have the joy.
His last words sent a subtle pulse through Alisha, spreading like lightning to her toes.

Alright, Tim said. Enough of the naughty stuff for now. Let's have a picnic, and

once the sun starts to dim, we'll figure out how to slip through the town to the other side so we can continue our journey.
Tim unrolled Alisha's old dress and spread it like a tablecloth. Everything the heart desired was there. Only the water was gone, but they could refill along the way.
Then Tim said: Chick-chick-chick, and the chicken came running, clucking enthusiastically.
Alisha felt a bit uneasy. You don't want to look your food in the eye.
The chicken's gaze took on a genuinely worried expression.
Alisha remembered the ham-pig in the tavern. Was this similar with the chicken? But how?
The chicken held out a leg.
Tim scratched his head. I've never eaten chicken here, he admitted.
The chicken roughly pulled up the feathers covering its thighs with its beak, like rolling up pants. And behold! Underneath were fully cooked, crispy chicken thighs—no, hen thighs.
That must be it.
Tim reached out and found that the hot (!) and very crispy meat came off the thighs easily. Underneath was a thin layer of muscle, apparently not meant to be eaten.
The chicken moaned, fell backward, and rolled its eyes.
Does it hurt? Alisha asked, concerned.
Tim checked. No, he concluded, that perverted creature seems to be having something like an orgasm, by the looks of it.
Alisha giggled, and her guilty conscience quietly slipped away.
Tim detached the second thigh and handed it to Alisha. Ow! The roasted meat was hot. Alisha hesitated... for principled reasons, but since the roast smelled so tempting, she finally took a bite. Fantastic! she exclaimed.
The chicken clucked contentedly but didn't forget to look at Tim with concern.
Alright, alright, he said, I'll try it too!
He bit into his roast. Mmm! he exclaimed. This is really good, and the skin is wonderfully crispy.
The chicken breathed a sigh of relief. Then it got up and, limping slightly, made its way back, probably to brag to the other chickens about how much even foreigners enjoyed its roasted thighs.
After the meal, Tim revisited the earlier incident: You know, Alisha, it probably won't be the last time someone suspects you're a witch from outside because of the quality of your milk. Luckily, the potency of milk varies every time, for every woman, depending on the time of day, diet, emotional state, a thousand things. Women here talk about it constantly and have countless tips on how to boost its potency. Some are true, some are nonsense, and no one can really say what works

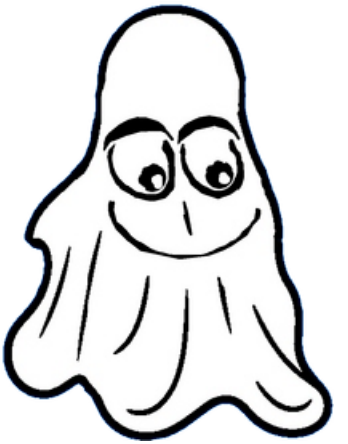
and what doesn't. So usually, there's no problem, and you can always claim that all the lucky circumstances came together at once for you. But occasionally, you meet someone sharp who notices your milk is far more potent than even the best possible normal milk. Maybe someone who's tasted witch milk before. You have to expect that.
And what's the best thing to do then? Alisha asked.
Depends on the situation, Tim said. If you're done in that area, like today, just get out, however you can. Otherwise, play dumb, and if that doesn't work, propose a deal. Your milk is so valuable that people will almost always go for it, especially since they don't know if you might enchant them or something. Three milkings will always get you out. If they demand more, threaten punishment—like turning them into a goat-head or something. That'll almost certainly be enough, especially since three doses of witch milk is a lot. But it all has to be secret; they need to be sure no one notices their shady deal. Otherwise, they'll rat you out to clear themselves.
And what do I do in that case?
Trickery, escape, pyre, run back if you've lost your crystal. So take good care of the crystal. But as I said, the high value of your milk will usually solve the problem. Most who notice its worth won't say a peep and will instead try to secretly—and ignorantly—get as much as they can.
For once, I'm delighted by human corruption, Alisha said.
Well, yeah, *first the milk, then the morals*, as they say here. Like in the mundane world—the more money you get, the more flexible your principles become. And since you're basically a walking money-printing machine...
Alisha laughed: But the richer you are, the worse you sleep.
Oh, Tim replied, don't forget you're a heavily armed money-printing machine that could go off at the slightest touch.
Alisha puffed out her chest: I'm a dangerous woman.
Convinced?
Convinced.

Eventually, they set off. Along the azure paved path. They'd left Alisha's old dress with the food scraps near the road. If anyone was searching for them, they'd follow this false trail in the wrong direction. Because they were heading back toward the town, which they somehow had to get past.
As they made their way toward the little town, a colorful twilight gradually set in. What always cheered Alisha: It wasn't accompanied by a cooling of the air. She hadn't once felt chilly in Peridëis. As if that didn't even exist here.
When it was already half-dark, the little town came into view.
They were passing through the remnants of a forest. Meadows lay ahead, but now they were walking under low trees and among scattered shrubs.

A clearing of a throat came from the bushes. They saw a shadow.
Alisha shrieked, then laughed.
There stood a rooster. A real rooster. And he'd been the one clearing his throat. When they looked at him, the rooster spread his feathers to show off his sturdy legs.
Oh, you poor rooster, Alisha said, clapping her hands together, no one wants to savor your fine thighs?
The rooster looked dejectedly at the ground.
You know what, Alisha said, we could actually use a nice supper. But we can't pay. Or would you take milk?
The rooster shuddered in horror.
You'd do it just like that?
The rooster nodded excitedly, clearly avoiding a loud crow to not draw too much attention.
Come here, chick-chick-chick, Alisha called, kneeling down.
The rooster came bounding over.
Alisha sat in the grass: Come here, she said, took the rooster onto her lap, and scratched its neck while Tim took what the rooster was eager to give.
You're a handsome one, Alisha praised the rooster.
It stretched proudly.
And you taste great! Tim added, smacking his lips.
The rooster couldn't help but crow, fell back onto Alisha, and panted from the emphatic praise.
Alisha gave it time to recover while she enjoyed her supper. This is one crazy land, she smirked. A few moments later, the rooster limped off, head held high with pride.

They waited. It was still too light. Alisha and Tim lay among the shrubs, lazing and gazing at the sky. Some time later, Alisha turned to Tim while lying down and offered her breast. Let's make use of the time, alright?
Tim took what was freely offered.
Alisha aided the milk-giving by letting her finger vibrate where her thighs met. The pull on her nipples steadily drew her toward climax, coaxing the orgasm out of her. With aftershocks.
When it was finally fully dark—or rather, not quite, as the moon shone brightly overhead—they ventured to the familiar gate in the town wall. The little town was fast asleep. Tim cautiously slid the gate open a crack and peeked inside. No one was in sight. Should they risk it? But Alisha couldn't defend herself like he could and, in her dress, wouldn't stand a chance of outrunning a fleet-footed man. No. First, they should check if there was a better route outside. Maybe the stream—it had to flow through or under the town somehow.

No one's there, Tim whispered to Alisha, but let's try the stream first anyway. We might be able to wade right through it—who looks into a dark stream at night? On a street, we'd be spotted instantly. And the water's sounds would cover ours. Let's head to the stream!
They followed the town wall outside until they reached the stream.
The route turned out to be much easier than expected. The little town was split into two parts, separated by the stream. Maybe even three parts, as the smaller valley likely had its own stream running through it. That wasn't clear in the darkness. Each part of the town had its own wall, with the stream running between them. They had to wade in the middle of the stream as planned, but its bed was firm gravel, with only the occasional large stone interrupting their path. Shoes didn't matter, as they weren't wearing any. Never walked so comfortably, Tim said loudly to Alisha, since the stream's noise made whispering unnecessary, even impossible.
With these water temperatures, too, Alisha laughed. The fact that her new dress could be hitched up came in very handy.
Tim pointed diagonally upward. Look!
Alisha saw a large bridge connecting the two parts of the town. It wasn't really a bridge, not a man-made one. It was rocks through which the stream had carved a path. They were now walking through a sort of tunnel. The tunnel was maybe four or five meters wide and about two and a half meters high. They didn't have to duck. It was surprisingly long, perhaps fifty meters. Inside, it glowed faintly with the familiar phosphorescent green light Alisha recognized.
That's why we didn't see the stream in the town! Tim said. They just built houses over it!
When they emerged from the tunnel on the other side, a much smaller stream from the other valley joined on the right. A bit farther, the town walls diverged, and they could leave the water. A little farther still, they found the other side of the azure paved path.
Done! Tim exhaled. Alright, let's walk another two or three hours to put enough distance between us and the town. I forgot to grab new fool's gold, too. You feeling awake?
I am!
Then let's go. No ghosts here. I think.
You jerk...
Tim laughed. No, honestly, I don't know of any ghosts, and I don't know anyone who's heard of anyone who's heard of any.
Really?
Really. I swear and regret the dumb joke.
Then let's go. Alisha was genuinely relieved. Witch or not, fear was still fear.



Tim Tells His Story

Alisha and Tim walked along the azure paved path, the moon directly overhead illuminating their way. For Alisha, it was a strangely new feeling to walk through a forest in the middle of the night without any fear. Not the slightest bit. She was almost euphoric. The moon looked beautiful, thousands of stars helped it shine, and the path ahead was clearly visible, though the tall cliffs on either side were only shadowy outlines. The stream beside them sometimes came closer, accompanying them with its babbling, and sometimes drifted farther away. When the treetops above merged, Alisha noticed that, despite the night, she could see quite far through the tree trunks.

Above all, it was pleasantly warm.

I don't even miss having a lamp, Alisha said to Tim. A lamp would take away the night's magic.

You'll be surprised, Tim said, but with a lamp, you see less. And it makes you more afraid.

Alisha was genuinely surprised. Why? she asked.

Your eyes adjust to the dark. If you come from bright light, you can't see anything at first because you're dazzled. If you don't turn on a flashlight, your eyes reach full sensitivity after 10-20 minutes. You mustn't look at bright light in the meantime, of course. Many people don't know this because they've never waited that long. There's always some residual light outside, just not in buildings or tunnels. But through a reasonably open forest, you can walk without a lamp. If

needed, you turn your head side to side, as you see a bit more peripherally, and movements are easier to spot than still objects. We had to practice this during training. Also because it makes you less likely to be noticed yourself.
And why is it less scary without a lamp?
With a flashlight, you're blinded. You can only see what's in the beam, not what's to the right or left. That's scary—the dark, the unpredictable. Not so without a flashlight. You see fewer details, but you can assess the overall situation, and that's what determines whether you feel afraid or not.
Is that why I feel so comfortable right now?
Maybe. But it's definitely Peridëis itself too.
Definitely. You... say... Alisha hesitated slightly. You mentioned your training. You know, I hardly know anything about you. Are you allowed to talk about yourself?
I am, Tim said. No one but the Stasi has forbidden me.
Alisha laughed. Tell me! she demanded. When, if not now in the night, is the time for it?
Well, Tim said, where do I start? It's not that much, really. My father was a war orphan and, as he says, he'd have ended up a drunk at best if they hadn't recruited him for the Stasi. So, he's Stasi too. My mother isn't, but she made a stellar career in the Party. I kind of floated through school, moderately successful, going with the flow. Not always, but overall. Things at home were fine, picture-perfect, except we were never allowed to watch Western TV. Except secretly listening to Western radio for the music, which I recorded. The schlager stuff on GDR radio is unbearable.
Alisha laughed.
And at friends' places, we'd watch whatever was on Western TV, no filter. I was especially into those post-apocalyptic films where civilization has collapsed, and everyone fends for themselves as best they can. Whenever those flicks came on, we'd organize it like a party to watch them. Including a backup TV location in case the first one unexpectedly wasn't available. Eventually, I got involved with a judo club, which was really fun. But it was a total mess of a group; sometimes training happened, sometimes you'd show up and the coach wouldn't. That kept happening and got pretty frustrating over time. So I started looking for an alternative. What I found was a martial arts club at Dynamo.
The Stasi sports club.
I didn't really realize that at the time. And honestly, I didn't care. They had a top-notch gym and proper changing facilities with showers and all. But most importantly: you showed up, and the training actually happened. A first-rate coach who didn't just teach us judo but other fighting techniques too. We just had to be careful about what was allowed in competitions and what wasn't. Otherwise, he was open to everything. At summer training camp, he even did scout-like stuff

with us, like orienteering and other things. But mainly martial arts.
Did you use it in fights?
I never had to fight. Everyone knew I did martial arts, so even the biggest idiots were very nice to me.
Alisha laughed.
No, really. There was never any trouble, and school went fine otherwise because my usual griping, as they called it, was "progressive" and "constructive." Not just dumb, like it was trendy for most of us. Anyway, at some point, they started nagging about extended service, career soldier, that kind of thing. My line was, three years I can handle, but not happily, and definitely not longer. I'm not a barracks type. Until we got a visit at home from two gentlemen who, after some back-and-forth, came out with it: they wanted me for the Stasi, a special unit, lone operative. No barracks. Ongoing training on the job, distance learning up to officer rank. Well, they got me at my weakest point, and I signed.
And then?
Embarrassing, embarrassing. At school, I was officially part of the FDJ applicant group for military careers, supposedly for the army, and everyone teased me. But that died down eventually. After graduation, I joined the Stasi. Training, further training, foreign missions as a military advisor, and then some shady stuff that didn't align with the official claims of the Party, state, or Stasi. I complained about it loudly at the wrong place and time, which cost me my rank.
What was it?
Weapons to the wrong people.
Alisha whistled through her teeth. And then?
Then I was just a lieutenant and got transferred to an outpost in the middle of nowhere, called "Object P." But they were actually really nice to me there. When they told me what it was about, it blew my mind. You know, they'd just found a transition to Peridëis in the forest and cordoned it off as a restricted area. Exactly like the transition we both used to get to Peridëis, and this one, too, had supposedly been targeted for destruction by the Nazis. And like the transition in Algeria, strange things happened around this one. Dangerous, inexplicable things.
Alisha was amazed: There's another transition right in the GDR? You only told me about the one in Berlin.
Why not? Tim replied. Peridëis is older than real existing socialism. They'd sealed off the area around the transition, supposedly due to unexploded ordnance, but that wasn't entirely wrong, as really unpredictable, dangerous things did happen there. Otherwise, the outpost was pretty small, just over 20 people, and only a handful actually went into the zone. After proper briefing, I was deployed for that—going in, identifying dangers, moving through the terrain, making observations, and writing reports. Later, I sometimes escorted people to the transition.

What kind of people, spies?
I only saw three actual unofficial informants who were supposed to go into Peridëis, no more. But that doesn't mean much, since no one was supposed to know about them except the officers directly handling them. Nobody else was even allowed to catch a glimpse. Beyond that, every now and then, shady folks from Berlin would roll up in fancy cars, not looking like Stasi at all. Supposedly scientists, but I never figured out who they really were, and you weren't allowed to ask. I was too small a fish for that. Anyway, those people went into Peridëis too, and we'd escort them to the transition. But we weren't allowed to go into Peridëis ourselves. That was strictly forbidden.
Why not?
Various reasons: external security, risk minimization, high danger, and so on. But mainly, they said it would corrupt us like a drug without extensive additional training, that it would mess with our psyche, potentially harm us, and so forth. The handlers probably didn't spell it out so clearly to their informants.
Is it harmful?
Harmful... in the Zone, probably not. In Peridëis, definitely not. But Peridëis is indeed corrupting. In the end, exactly what they warned me about happened to me.
What happened?
Over Easter, the office was dead. Everyone was on leave, and only one person stayed behind as duty officer for any contingencies. But those contingencies never happened. You just had to check that everything was locked up, and otherwise, you could watch TV, listen to radio, or read books. Boring. Around the Zone, there's an extra restricted area guarded by a separate unit we don't interact with, except where it borders our object. So you don't even really have to watch the Zone itself. One day, I grabbed the key to the gate and went into the Zone alone, without permission. I figured three hours—a calculated risk: one hour there, one hour in, one hour back. I don't need to tell you what it's like at the transition. It was overwhelming! It knocked me flat. Physically, but also mentally. I just couldn't understand why they kept something like this secret. Why they'd deny people something so beautiful. All of a sudden, the GDR felt dull, rotten, dishonest. It hit me that those so-called scientists were just bigwigs, Party bosses, out for a good time. Does a scientist drive a Volga, Chaika, Tatra, Volvo, or Citroën? I'm not that stupid. But it wasn't that that got me—it was the incredible beauty of Peridëis.
And that they're keeping it from people.
Exactly. That's the core of it. The first time, I stayed in Peridëis for hours, not just the one I'd planned. When I reluctantly returned, I was terrified I'd been found out. But everything was quiet. To my shock, when I got back to my office, I saw I'd been gone for less than the three hours I'd planned. It felt like seven or eight! I

only later learned that twelve hours in Peridëis equals just one hour in the mundane world. Crazy. Back then, I wasn't yet assigned to escort people to the transition, so I didn't know about this time dilation. I didn't understand it at first, but I dove into our object's library like a bookworm. It was openly available to all of us, full of technical books, sagas, fairy tales, and modern science fiction novels, including tons of Western books. Logically, after reading various books, the only explanations were a fairy-tale realm or advanced technology from an alien intelligence. As a staunch comrade, I went for the staunchly scientific explanation.

How cute that you leave room for doubt. Keep going.

Tim laughed. Well, I forced myself not to beg for assignments, to avoid drawing attention. But the next chance came, then the one after that, and the one after that. And back into Peridëis I went. I made damn sure everyone was far away before I set out. I explored Peridëis, got caught masturbating in a field for the first time in my life...

Alisha laughed.

Seriously. Right in the middle of it, in a meadow. It was a woman, and without blushing, she said it was a waste and sat on me to finish it in a more useful way, as she put it. Then she convinced me to drink from her breast, and poof, she was gone.

Why'd she leave?

I didn't know back then, but now I'd say it was because of me. No desire for attachment, but that's too long a story. Anyway, there were always women I found very pretty and nice, who'd offer their breast, give me a kiss, and then be gone. The weirdest thing, at least back then: After a brief moment of regret, I was always glad to keep roaming and exploring Peridëis. At least the area around the transition—there was plenty to see. I didn't dare go farther, as women had told me why men always needed to drink women's breastmilk. In Peridëis, it's vital for survival! I experienced it once. First, light pains, then they get worse. I didn't risk more and hightailed it back. So I never overdid my trips and just enjoyed what came my way. And during regular duty, I noticed something else. We had a *really* well-stocked library, but it was barely used. Same with several offices that were hardly occupied. It felt like someone had taken a deep breath and then suddenly lost their nerve. The Zone alone was such a fascinating phenomenon; it had to spark curiosity. But everything gave the impression that some things were deliberately ignored.

Because they didn't fit the worldview?

Because they didn't fit the worldview *or* because even more people got corrupted. Why not *both*? Don't you see you're questioning your own worldview?

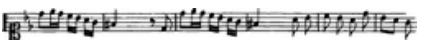
Questioning? No. An expert marvels; a layman wonders. The difference is whether you *want* to see and understand. I *want* to understand. I accept there are

things I can't grasp yet, but if I truly want to understand and not just believe, I also want to know *why* things are the way they are. Otherwise, what's the difference between the Church and socialism if everyone just clings to their pretty picture and ignores what doesn't fit?
Fair point. Hit. But I don't force my pretty picture on others.
Hit. As long as it stays that way. It hasn't always been so in history.
Hit. But keep going!
Well, for me, the principle was violated—that you have to face the new, the principle of debate and counter-debate, where you honestly test who has the better argument, where you search with open eyes, and where a theory becomes invalid if someone convincingly disproves it. In short: My beloved socialism was apparently just another kind of religion, a bag of hot air, nicely packaged to sell the product and let the sellers gorge themselves with a clear conscience. But I'd believed in the contents, not the packaging.
Take comfort, Alisha said. The Church isn't always as Christian inside as it claims.
All the more reason Peridëis was so precious to me... One of those supposed researchers must've needed to get something off his chest and told me a few fragments "under the seal of secrecy." It was a bunch of stuff I'd never seen in Peridëis myself. He probably thought I, as an "insider," already knew everything. The key thing was: He said the locals worshipped him as a god. Man! Does that ring a bell?
???
Don't you get what that means?
Noooo, what do you mean?
Tim chuckled: At first, it just sparked my curiosity; the real meaning only hit me later. In Peridëis, your deepest inner wishes come true, as long as other visitors don't interfere or their wishes blend into a compromise with yours. So what was the deepest wish of this socialist champion?
Oh man! Alisha laughed. Don't say any names. I don't even want to know.
So there are gods among us, Tim concluded piously. And what does that tell us? A society must be built to function even with clowns, eggheads, morons, and psychopaths at the top. And that certainly doesn't apply to a little dictatorship, even if they're all saintly proletarians, vegetarians, humanoids, or true Christians, with or without pubic hair.
What's that got to do with pubic hair?
Nothing. That's what I'm saying.
Keep going.
The rest is quickly told. Later, I went over the fence at another spot. I knew where there was no risk and when no one was in the Zone. That wasn't a problem. But at some point, I got caught in Peridëis itself. By the Peris' bailiffs.

Bailiff???
Yeah, like me now.
Did they actually wear that uniform too?
Yeah, they did. It completely threw me. Exactly this uniform, but with a whip and a piece of rope instead of a pistol, and up on the cap, the symbol of the woman holding out her breasts to the viewer instead of the GDR emblem.
And what did you think then?
Nothing, I thought I'd gone mad.
Alisha laughed: I can totally imagine that. And what did those bailiffs want?
They keep half an eye on betrayed transitions. When an unauthorized visitor is caught, they usually try to pin them to a specific area, scare them off, or, alternatively, give them a chance. They dragged me to one of the Peris, and I got my chance by serving the Peris as a bailiff for a while. Also by doing a few things in the GDR-side Zone.
Like what?
Oh, small stuff. For example, I supposedly had an accident in the Zone. When something like that happens, they have a reason to let fewer people in. And then there was a really pleasant assignment from the Peris.
...
You have to ask which one now.
Which one?
Preparing everything to bring you to Peridëis.
Really, you were involved in that? Back home already?
Not there yet. But other visitors were in play.
And those weird things that happened?
What do you mean?
Come on, things happened that don't exactly fall into the realm of probability greater than a hundredth of a percent.
Oh, that kind of thing... yeah... here I have to partly agree with you. Around these transitions, strange things sometimes happen in the mundane world too... or you find strange things with strange effects that I can't begin to explain. Not based on physics, chemistry, or anything like that. Things that even an expert marvels at...
Oh!
Yeah. So you got one of those things.
The story?
Yeah, the story. The little book with the story is, as far as we can tell, not of earthly origin, or better put: It's not from the mundane world. You'd never have gotten it if there'd been any risk of it falling into someone else's hands. When you hold that book, it has effects. How to describe it... in fairy-tale terms, it's like a little bit of what you experience here in Peridëis already clings to it. But what happens there is a real mystery to me. It definitely causes things.

Why all the effort? Why not just through a transition in the GDR?
Remember...
Oh yeah, only once you've felt Peridëis yourself... But what if they'd blindfolded me?
No one knows what drives the Peris. They ultimately hold all the cards here, and they don't reveal their secrets.
Hm.
But wasn't it much nicer this way?
Yeah, that's true! Just the huge effort...
Maybe you're important to the Peris.

For a while longer, Alisha and Tim wandered through the moonlit valley. But eventually, Tim found a sleeping spot, Alisha did a little hand relaxation to fall asleep, while Tim relieved Alisha of the elixir he so urgently needed to live. This made it all the easier for Alisha to reach her longed-for climax, while Tim, in turn, got more of that fresh, valuable elixir through it. And since no one had followed them and no one disturbed them, they slept a deep, restful sleep.
The next morning, Tim insisted on getting new fool's gold pieces from a cave, and then they continued through the endless yet beautiful valley with its splendid blossoms, fruits, sometimes forest, sometimes grove, sometimes meadow, and occasionally a bathing spot in the stream. That is, the valley wasn't actually endless, as numerous other valleys branched off, though paths into them were rare.



The Sleeping Beauty Castle

After several days of wandering along the azure paved path with many breaks for Alisha's relaxation, the valley suddenly opened to at least three times its width, and the forest gave way to a flower-covered meadow. But the stream continued straight ahead, right past a mountain in the middle of the valley. And beside it, the azure paved path. Alisha and Tim walked cheerfully chatting along the path.
But when they reached the mountain in the center of the valley, they saw that the mountain was a rock, and the rock was completely covered with roses. And not only that. The azure paved path branched off, and the side path led straight into the rock. Curious, Alisha and Tim approached.
What could be there?
But at the very moment they stood before the rock, the roses began to part, revealing a large gate before their eyes. What was this?
They stepped closer.

And then it became clear that the rock wasn't a rock at all, but a grand and magnificent castle, completely overgrown with roses.
Can we go in? Tim asked.
But what if the roses close again? Alisha asked back.
Both stepped cautiously closer and peered through the gate.
Look at that! Alisha called out excitedly, pointing to the left part of the castle courtyard. What they saw were numerous people, as you'd expect in a castle's daily life, but all stood like dolls, frozen mid-motion, as if someone had paused a movie. But what Alisha was pointing at was something special. It was a cook about to slap a kitchen boy.
It looks like Sleeping Beauty's castle! Alisha said, pinching Tim's arm.
Ouch, he said, but you might be right. I remember the cook and the kitchen boy just like that.
But in Sleeping Beauty, the roses didn't close again! Alisha said. That means we could go in safely.
Tim remained skeptical. Alisha pestered him until he finally gave in, but on the condition that he'd scout first. Reluctantly, Alisha curbed her curiosity. When Tim entered the courtyard, Alisha stayed as close to the gate as possible.
Tim took a step.
Nothing changed.
He glanced up suspiciously and took another step.
Nothing changed.
Another step.
The roses stayed perfectly still.
Then Tim walked on decisively.
What was he up to? Quite simple. Tim grabbed several long tables and benches and dragged them to the gate. There, he built a kind of tunnel with the tables and benches, through which one could crawl if the roses decided to close the entrance again.
Not bad at all, Alisha commented approvingly.
When Tim was done, he invited her to join him in the courtyard.
Everything was exactly as described in the Sleeping Beauty fairy tale. Except that the bare-breasted women had been censored out of the youth-friendly version, the kitchen boy turned out to be an adult, and several castle inhabitants were doing things typically omitted in children's books, even though this unfortunately leaves unclear why men and women come together when their officially mentioned interests often seem so different. Here, various people made no secret of *what* magically drew them to each other, and their faces showed *why* they did it. Alisha also spotted two women tightly entwined. When she approached curiously, she learned what she'd always wanted to know out of pure technical interest: that elongated objects weren't strictly necessary.

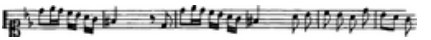
You little piglet, Tim's voice came from behind Alisha.
She had, after all, peeked under the skirt to fill her knowledge gap.
I really wanted to know, Alisha defended herself. They're doing it just like me. It honestly interested me.
Tim scratched his head. Here we are at the morality question again. But you know what? This Sleeping Beauty castle reminds me of the buried city of Pompeii: a snapshot you'd never otherwise get. Real, unfiltered life laid out for us to see. Shall we use it to learn? Go through the castle, top to bottom, see what people are doing?
Deal! Alisha was thrilled. But let's do it like I just did: leave nothing out. Otherwise, it's pointless, and we're not being honest.

Alisha and Tim roamed the castle. They opened doors and dungeons, just as they opened cabinets and caskets, just as they unbuttoned trousers and lifted skirts. They saw the good and the bad, they saw... unfiltered life. The real thing. The normal, which is so often portrayed as abnormal in everyday life. And they had time to quietly observe the secret things and reflect on them. Though Alisha and Tim could have looked in locker rooms and elsewhere to see the hidden parts of the opposite sex, the rule was you had to ignore them. Tim mentioned that this was also true among bare-breasted peoples of the world: men were strictly forbidden from staring at women's breasts. Only when so-called civilized people came and started staring did those bare-breasted cultures begin to cover up. At least when the civilized were around.
Alisha and Tim were now shamelessly civilized. Alisha talked about flesh-and-blood penises, while Tim marveled at how different each vulva was. They couldn't agree on the plural of vulva[50]. And what people were doing instead of working! But that would go too far now. It was a very exciting afternoon.
But eventually, they stood at the foot of the castle tower.
I'm not going up there, Tim said.
What? Alisha asked. You don't want to see Sleeping Beauty?
No, he said. Some dreams I want to keep as dreams. Sleeping Beauty is a beautiful fairy tale I love, and I have an inner image of her. I want it to stay that way. Besides, you'd probably want me to kiss her awake.
Of course, Alisha said. What's the big deal?
No way, Tim said. That would change the fairy tale, unless I stayed as the prince. But I'm not keen on being a fairy-tale prince. And do you think a kiss is enough? They probably left something out in the official tale, and I'd be the fool who has to deflower her to wake her up.
At first, Alisha was taken aback, but now she laughed. Oh, come on, a little

50 Vulva, plural: Latin *vulvae*, German *die Vulven* English t*he vulvas* or *the vulvae*.

deflowering...
There's another serious argument, Tim picked up the thread. Think about it: how old was she when she was put into the enchanted sleep? Fourteen. And how long was the spell supposed to last? A hundred years. Total? A hundred and fourteen years. See?
You're lying, you're lying! In Peridëis, you don't age!
Alright, caught, but marriage would come next. A conceited, moody, probably ugly princess—only celibacy might tip the scales in her favor, but I know something better. Not as rich, but...
Tim fell silent, shocked, and turned deep red.
Alisha took his hand. Then she said hoarsely: Come, let's go.
Both turned toward the gate, Tim cleared the benches and tables away, and they left the castle. Once they were outside, the roses closed the gate again as before.
Alisha and Tim returned to the main path, the azure paved path, and continued their journey.

And it is said that at that very moment, the real prince came around the corner. But no one knows for sure. Someone would have to go check.



The Witch's House

Alisha and Tim walked cheerfully chatting along the azure paved path. The birds screeched, chirped, sang, croaked, and whistled, the sun above shone through the treetops, and the dense forest kept surprising them with the strangest trees and colorful blossoms. So they didn't notice at first that the azure paved path was gradually being overgrown with grass and that, a bit farther, the shrubs were creeping closer to the path. But finally, they paused, as the last bit of the path vanished under a blanket of grass, and only a clearing between the trees showed where the path led.
What now? Alisha asked.
Hm! Tim grunted. We don't have a choice—we *have* to take this path. So, no help for it, let's push through the underbrush. We can't really get lost as long as we stay in the valley. We just need to be careful not to accidentally turn back and retrace our steps.
Can't you navigate by the direction of the trees, like checking where the moss grows or something like that? Alisha asked.
Doesn't work in Peridëis, Tim replied. There's no prevailing wind direction, and the sun is always directly overhead. Even the stars at night don't help because they just circle around the sun, which doesn't get us anywhere.

Compass?
Don’t have one, and they don’t exist here. If you make one, it won’t point in a consistent direction. Some people have tried.
Alisha fell silent, dismayed.
Let’s have a picnic before we dive into the forest, Tim cheered her up. I saw some coffee fruits over there.
He dropped his backpack to the ground and ran to pick one of the fruits. Alisha settled on the ground, spreading the skirt of her dress around her. How nice that there are no ants here, she thought as her bottom touched the ground. She watched Tim carefully plucking the coffee fruit from the tree. When he returned, he placed the fruit on the ground and rummaged through the backpack for cups and various food supplies. He carefully poked two holes in the fruit and poured the hot coffee into the cups.
I’d like it with milk! he joked.
I can do that, Alisha replied, no longer wanting to treat it as a joke or something odd deep inside. With a serious look, she placed one of the cups under her breast.
Tim understood immediately and was grateful. Joking is often just a sign of insecurity in men.
Ouch! The coffee’s way too hot! Alisha exclaimed, flinching back.
Tim scratched his head. Hm, he said, I should’ve thought of that earlier. Just pour out the coffee; we don’t need to be stingy.
Alisha did so and waved the cup through the air to cool it. Then she offered her right breast to Tim. Don’t you want to... milk me?
Try it yourself, Tim suggested. You’ll have to learn it anyway.
Alisha held the cup under her right breast with her left hand.
Use your thumb and two fingers!
Alisha did so and squeezed. Nothing came out, though her breast had just pinched at the sides in the familiar way. She tried pulling.
Tim knelt behind Alisha and showed her slowly: So, thumb on one side, index and middle finger on the other. You start just behind the areola and make a wringing motion forward. Like squeezing a toothpaste tube. Until the breast starts reacting on its own, you do it with a rolling motion, so you don’t rub the skin too much and make it sore over time. Once the breast and fingers are wet with milk, it gets easier. Try it!
Alisha tried. Position, press in, roll forward... not so easy. Her nipple stretched until her fingers finally reached the very tip. There! Three or four milk droplets emerged from different spots on the nipple. Well, at least something. She reached back and repeated the motion. Again and again. More droplets came, and finally, a trickle ran down her breast. Unfortunately, not into the cup. The trickle broke up halfway between her nipple and belly, wetting her dress. Oh well. Tim encouraged her. Alisha’s movements grew steadier, more rhythmic. She began to

feel the grape-like structures of the milk glands inside her breasts, hinting at where milk was available. Instinctively, she massaged those spots, pushing the milk toward the nipple. There! A proper milk squirt came from her breast. Unfortunately, it hit her own cup on the ground, not the one in her left hand. Alisha laughed.

Wring the breast all the way to the end of the nipple, Tim said from behind her. And target the spot that just gave milk. Milk it out until it's empty before moving your hand elsewhere. You can switch breasts the same way later. And keep it rhythmic—find your own rhythm that yields the most milk. There's something like an optimal tempo.

There! Another squirt. Alisha was at it with fervor. Another, and this one was substantial! Now she aimed her breast better at the cup. Milk. Two squirts. Milk. Three or four squirts. Milk. A whole shower of milk from multiple openings at once. Unfortunately, in all directions instead of into the cup. Milk. Milk. Milk. Nice and rhythmic. Pull the breast. Milk. Closer to the cup. Massage a bit farther back on the breast. Milk. Milk streams. Milk streams. Milk streams.

But even after some time, the bottom of the cup was barely covered.

Don't get frustrated, Tim comforted from behind. It'll come. Come on, I'll do the rest.

Tim reached under her arms for her breast in his usual way, making the familiar milking motions that made Alisha purr. What a rhythm he had! And how he sensed where the breast wanted to be milked. Alisha closed her eyes and gave in to the sensation. Left breast, then right, back to left, then right again.

Done! Tim blew into Alisha's ear. She shivered.

How do you do that...

Blow in your ear?

Ugh! Alisha stuck out her tongue at him. Come on, let's eat already.

The coffee's cold, though.

Oh noooo!

Now Alisha jumped up, grabbed a new coffee fruit, and poured. Tim took a half-and-half milk coffee. There was enough breastmilk for that now.

How's it taste? Alisha asked.

Wonderful! came the reply. Half-and-half is the ideal mix with breastmilk. Less breastmilk is skimping in the wrong place; you can even go heavier on it. I'll try a lot of breastmilk with a shot of strong mocha sometime. That's bound to be great. With tea, you can use much less breastmilk, but not with coffee[51].

When they finished eating, Tim looked at the rock walls enclosing the valley. He pointed ahead: If the valley splits, we need to keep left, but maybe we'll find the

51 The Chinese Empress Cixi (1835–1908) preferred black tea with breastmilk. She maintained a dedicated milk palace to ensure ample supply for herself and high court officials.

path again before that. Worst case, I'll climb a tree or rock. Come on, let's go!
He waved to Alisha, who shook out her dress, and they set off. The underbrush was less dense than Alisha had expected. It was actually pretty walkable. Not as nice as the path, but doable. But the forest grew denser over time, and the path's clearing wasn't always clear anymore. Gaps between the trees occasionally allowed a glimpse of the valley's bounding rocks, so they didn't completely lose their way, even when the clearing was no longer discernible. Alisha was getting uneasy, wondering how Tim could still find the path at all.
Worst case, we lose some time, Tim said. That's not terrible since we have plenty of it.
But my vacation will end eventually, won't it?
Yes and no. You're in Peridëis, so we have twelve times more time.
Still, you don't want to wander aimlessly forever. Do you even know roughly where we are?
No.
What? Alisha had inwardly seen Tim as some kind of demigod who, among other things, would *obviously* never get lost.
No big deal, he growled. If you don't get one adventure, you get another. Peridëis is never boring—that's a promise! Just wait.
I'm just saying.
Me too, Tim said lightly. Come on, the trees are less dense that way. I've only got one worry: we won't starve, but the food options around here are meager in terms of flavor. You might have to go hungry. He looked at Alisha with clearly feigned pity.
Me?
Yeah, you! I've got no reason to complain; after all, you turn even the nastiest cafeteria slop into tasty milk. If it came to the worst, I'd let you take the lead in feeding the masses and make do with your personal products.
You jerk! Alisha laughed.
But Tim wasn't wrong. What grew here wasn't very appetizing. About as good as a low-end company cafeteria. Tim teased Alisha that her milk tasted like chocolate or vanilla ice cream. But even he had to eat the fruits of this area, as what Alisha's breasts provided would never have been enough to fill him up. The upside was that Alisha's breasts got more attention than strictly necessary, which significantly contributed to their growth and flourishing.
So they pushed through the forest.
After crossing a small stream, Tim suddenly thought he recognized a path again. And indeed! Every now and then, they even saw that individual branches had been cut, and a narrow sandy trail became visible on the ground. Could someone be living out here in the middle of the forest?
They kept going.

And behold, a little house peeked out from between the trees. And it wasn't just any house—no, it was a house entirely made of gingerbread.
Alisha squealed: A gingerbread house! Is there a witch here too?
Alisha broke off a piece of gingerbread when they reached the house. Hm, it tasted completely different from all the stuff around here; a bit dry, but the flavor was exquisite.
Tim chuckled as if he suspected something, but he broke off a piece of gingerbread too.
Then a voice was heard: Nibble, nibble, little mouse, who's nibbling at my house?
The wind, the wind, the heavenly child! Tim replied, already tearing up with laughter, but kept eating, as the gingerbread tasted *really* excellent. Alisha, on the other hand, widened her eyes and forgot to keep eating, so impressed was she.
Suddenly, the door of the house opened, and a witch stepped out. But she wasn't as old as written in a certain children's book, which anyway seems to lack important parts and doesn't quite tell the whole truth in others. Be that as it may, the witch was older than Alisha and Tim. Let's say she was at that ripe age when a woman's fire has fully ignited, but she certainly wasn't old. Nor hunched. Quite the contrary, she radiated strength and health, and the tiny wrinkles on her face might rather suggest she was past the age when women believe in the fairy tale of the virtuous maiden, which keeps their legs together for no good reason. As you can see, there are many prejudices about witches that need to be set aside. But the witch had a direct, commanding gaze that would surely make weaker souls buckle at the knees. Not malicious. Not really. Hard to say. Something unmistakably magical and very strange emanated from her gaze. A fire burned in it, and Alisha hardly dared look into it, fearing she'd lose herself. The witch was dressed entirely in black leather. The top reminded Alisha a little of a dirndl, only made of complicatedly laced leather, and the witch's very full breasts were not exposed in the balcony, but hung heavily and completely out in the open. The short skirt had a slit at the front and left the pubic area (black curls) exposed and was short enough at the back to let the rather splendid bottom peek out a little. Tim got Alisha's elbow in the side because she didn't like the way he was looking at her.
The witch whistled through her teeth and said: Well, you two pretties, where did you come from? Come inside, you'll have a good time with me today, get tasty food, and a place to sleep. (Lawyers may note: The witch promised no more than this.)
In the witch's house, Alisha and Tim were served a good meal, milk (Alisha was a bit skeptical), pancakes with sugar, apples, and nuts, and then two fine beds were prepared. Alisha and Tim lay down (Alisha in one, Tim in the other), thinking they were in heaven.
But it was the witch who had ensured the azure paved path was no longer findable, and she had built the gingerbread house in the middle of the forest just

to lure in lost people. When they fell into her clutches... well, we'll see what happens next.
After the meal, Alisha and Tim fell into a deep sleep, as they were very tired. But the witch had also mixed a potent sleeping draught into their food.
And what did Alisha and Tim find when they woke in the morning? Well, Tim found himself naked in a cage, while Alisha was barked at by the witch to get dressed and sweep the room. The witch held a meter-long leather whip in her hands, which she hadn't shown the previous evening. The whip was notably longer than the one Tim carried with his uniform. Or rather, had carried. A door to a back room stood open, which hadn't been open the night before. And what did Alisha see to her horror? The back room was filled with various equipment, designed to satisfy dark desires but likely to terrify simpler souls.
Do exactly as I say, the witch threatened Alisha with flashing eyes, or I'll show you my magic.
Alisha stayed silent. Just wait, she thought to herself, sweeping will give me time to think, and I'll come up with something. But aloud, she asked: How am I supposed to sweep the floor when I don't have anything to do it with?
You silly Lisel, the witch hissed, and Tim laughed in his cage when he heard what the witch called Alisha.
Revenge! Alisha swore silently. Old hag, I won't forget this! But she also thought: If Tim's laughing, it can't be that bad.
You silly Lisel, the witch said again. Back there, you'll find a bucket and rag, and you know where the stream is. So hurry up and don't dawdle.
And you, the witch turned to Tim with fake friendliness, *those without breasts pay with the rest of their body*. You'll serve me differently. It's been a long time since my lap was stretched, kneaded, and moistened by a sturdy pestle like the splendid one you're equipped with. Do it thoroughly, and you'll both go free!
Never! Tim replied. Besides, I'm not even allowed to, as you well know, since I'm a bailiff.
I know, the witch giggled, but if you're forced, that doesn't count, does it?
Tim fell silent.
Just as I thought, the witch said. We'll see. You're a man, still quite young, and my experience tells me that young men get thoroughly shaken by their urges if you just stoke them enough. In the end, you'll serve me, sooner or later. A woman can be patient, unlike you men, just wait. Now, show me if your pestle is hard yet.
But Tim showed her his penis with a clear gaze—and it was completely limp, useless to the witch.
Just you wait, the witch shouted angrily, striking through the bars with the meter-long leather whip.
Ouch! Tim cried, as the blow landed well. The witch was practiced and not unskilled.

Push your pleasure finger through the bars, she demanded.
Tim hesitated.
Well? The witch raised the meter-long leather whip again.
Tim complied, having no cover in his cage, and pressed his body against the bars.
The witch grabbed his pleasure finger, tried her tricks, but found it as limp as before.
Hm, she growled. We'll see.
Just then, Alisha returned with the bucket full of water from the stream, and the witch sensed treacherous life stirring in Tim's pleasure finger.
Furious, the witch turned away.
Lisel, she growled, put the bucket down and come here.
She beckoned Alisha to the oven.
Alisha approached the witch and the oven hesitantly. When she got there, the witch reached into the firebox, where no fire was burning at the moment, and pulled out a handful of soot, which she smeared on Alisha's face.
There! the witch cackled. Now you don't look as enticing as before.
Then the witch's gaze fell on Alisha's breasts.
The witch cackled again: I've got an idea, let's wait and see, let's wait and see...
Sit on that chair over there! she barked at Alisha.
Alisha could hardly tear herself away from the witch's piercing eyes, and she felt uneasy because the designated chair wasn't an ordinary chair but one with restraints attached.
Ouch! The witch had swiftly lifted Alisha's skirt at the back and given her a sharp smack with the meter-long leather whip in the same moment.
Ffffff! Alisha gasped, writhing as she hopped from one foot to the other on her tiptoes, rubbing the stinging buttock with her left hand.
And? the witch asked. Does that help you sit down?
Alisha quickly ran to the chair and sat.
Restraints closed around Alisha's wrists and neck.
There, my Lisel, the witch said (Alisha heard a chuckle from the cage), there. *Good woman, full breasts*, I won't punish you if you let your milk be taken nicely. So be good, and I won't punish you. With that, she grabbed Alisha's breasts and began kneading them with all the skill of her art. And the witch was good! Alisha felt entirely different, her body slipping beyond her mind's control. Skilled hands plowed through her breasts, far more adept than Tim's—worlds apart! Alisha gasped, losing what's commonly called her senses in an unimaginably short time. The witch could truly work magic. Her hands kneaded, wrung, stroked, enticed, shook, pressed, tickled, tinkled, tapped, and pulled. Alisha got goosebumps, shuddered, moaned, squeaked, squealed, cried, and in short: felt good.
The milk sprayed stream after stream into the cup the witch had placed on the table in front of Alisha's breasts, filling it surge after surge.

Finally, the witch relented, and Alisha returned to the world through a veil of tears. What a cruel woman, to gain such power over her!
The witch, meanwhile, released the chair's restraints, pulled Alisha up with surprising strength, gave her a smack on the butt, and snapped at her sharply: Off, Lisel! You still have the floor to scrub. Alisha hurried on her way.
The witch herself inhaled the scent of the milked milk. Hm, she said, *you shouldn't ogle the breasts of a stolen woman*, meaning it could've been more. Does that woman always give so little milk? she turned to Tim.
The woman doesn't give milk to just anyone who wants to milk her, Tim countered.
Don't get cheeky, the witch replied, tasting the milked milk. I've had better, she grumbled. Say, Lisel, what have you been eating the past few days? Bird droppings? Yet she looked as if she'd just taken a powerful drug.
Alisha, kneeling and scrubbing the floor, said nothing.
The witch, knocking over a chair, staggered to her stove with the filled cup, dropped a pot, lit a fire, burned her fingers, and it was clear she was grinding secret herbs, letting more fall to the floor, adding the rest as powder to the milk, which simmered. Around the stove hung bundles of dried herbs, and the walls on either side were lined with shelves holding countless large and small pots and jars, containing who-knows-what.
The witch stood, still seeming intoxicated, at the stove where Alisha's breastmilk was being heated. And you could hear her muttering incantations the whole time. Her right hand made circular motions over the pot, while her left hand stirred the milk. This seemed to work very well. And she did all this until nothing but a powder remained in the pot. She ground the powder even finer with a bronze knife on a wooden board and then put half of it into a lidded bronze pot. The other half she mixed with a shimmering blue powder, muttered incantations over it again, finally mixed it with a tiny bit of water, and shaped it into a small square object that looked like a pill made by apothecaries. Only it was square, or rather, rhombus-shaped[52]. Why she did this remained the witch's secret. But at last, she took the square blue pill, placed it in a small clay vessel, and giggled. Let's wait and see, let's wait and see, she murmured to herself when she was done.
Marvelous brew, the witch muttered to herself and sank into a chair after her work. What she meant wasn't entirely clear.
Alisha, meanwhile, had to scrub the floor of the gingerbread house the whole time, but the witch fetched water and wood herself. This wasn't much trouble for her, as a washtub stood in front of the gingerbread house that only needed to be told "Fly!" and it would. She'd load it with either wood or water or even fly in it herself. Alisha grew quite envious when she saw this handy contraption. The

52 I mention this in detail because the meaning of these actions remains obscure, and oddly, similar pills have appeared in the other world.

witch didn't forget her meter-long leather whip, but just as with Alisha's chores, she didn't overdo it too much. The reason for this she muttered softly to herself: *Sweating empties teats*. Because every two or three hours, Alisha's breastmilk was taken, and the witch wanted as much of it as possible. She was downright greedy for it, always making powders, ointments, and potions from it. And she never forgot to take a sample of Alisha's breastmilk, taste it, mutter *bird droppings*, and then act as if she were completely drunk.
One thing puzzled Alisha: The witch milked herself too, but she only made powders and ointments from it, without secret herbs or incantations, and kept them in a different pot.
So the day passed. Alisha scrubbed the floor, the witch watched with her meter-long leather whip to ensure it was done properly, then Alisha tidied up, wiped the tables, and folded Tim's clothes neatly countless times.
In the evening, the witch allowed Alisha for the first time to briefly offer her breast to Tim through the bars, but only for a short while.
That'll just about do for you, just about.
Lisel, the witch said, you'll now make sure Tim doesn't soil his cage. And she pointed to a jug standing on the floor beside the cage. And as witches are, that wasn't enough cruelty, for the witch sat on a chair and wanted to watch Tim avoid soiling his cage.
Hurry up! the witch called.
Alisha blushed, but since the witch had her meter-long leather whip lying across her lap, she didn't dare protest, bent down for the jug, and turned to Tim.
Come, Alisha whispered, there's no help for it, come here, I'll do it gladly for you.
Tim approached hesitantly, as he too was uneasy under the witch's gaze.
Closer, Alisha whispered tenderly to encourage him. And when he did, standing close to the bars facing her, she took his penis to guide it into the jug.
But Alisha hadn't considered the effect a woman's grip can have, and inevitably *must* have on him. The penis grew increasingly stiff and now pointed upward out of the jug instead of downward into it.
Now they were in a bind.
Alisha blocked the view between the witch and Tim.
Get on with it! the witch called out.
Alisha quickly turned aside, as her backside was dangerously within the witch's reach at that moment.
What do we have here, what do we have here! the witch rejoiced.
And she added: Well, my pretty, not working out?
Such cruelty! Tim honestly tried to give in to his urge to relieve himself, but under these circumstances, it was a tough task.
He looked into the air. It didn't work.

He looked out of the house. It worked a little. After a while. But only very little.
He looked at the witch. His pestle pointed straight up again. She wasn't exactly ugly. No, not that!
He looked at the floor. It didn't work.
Tim remembered what he was outside Peridëis: a mere Stasi soldier. He thought of his Party secretary, and this time it worked. He urinated until the jug was well-filled, and even Alisha's warm hand had no arousing effect during it.
Do you need to... go in the back too? Alisha asked hesitantly.
No, Tim replied.
Really not, he added under Alisha's probing look.
Alisha took the jug out of the house, emptied it, and washed it out.
When Alisha returned, the witch cooked a surprisingly good and surprisingly hearty meal. Tim ate his portion in his cage, while Alisha and the witch ate at the table.
Let the woman eat what she wants, as long as she gives good milk, the witch growled to herself. And I'll get my due from Tim too, she added silently.
This time, too, the witch had mixed a potent sleeping draught into the food. Alisha was overcome by a leaden tiredness, Tim yawned heartily in his cage, and both soon fell into a deep sleep again.
And so several days passed. Tim resisted the witch, who checked daily whether his pestle grew large and firm when she tested it through the cage bars with her hand. But she still had no power over it.
But the witch was neither foolish nor inexperienced. When Alisha was present during one of these tests of the pestle, the witch remarked casually: Well, my pretty, it's your own fault that you both have to linger here in my little house.
Your own fault? Alisha couldn't help but speak up.
Well, the witch said, all the lad has to do is give it to me good and proper once, and you're both free. But if he doesn't want to...
Alisha burst into loud laughter. She hadn't thought of this obvious solution, so innocent (or perhaps not so innocent?) was she. Ooooh, she said hypocritically to Tim, you don't want to give it to the witch? Not even once?
Hush! The witch was already upon Alisha, clamping her between her legs, and while Alisha squirmed, her bottom was quickly bared, and the meter-long leather whip came down one-two-three times, not too hard, but well-aimed, on Alisha's backside.
Ow-Ow-Ow! Alisha wailed, but still laughed. I'll never say *witch* again!
You may well say *witch*, the witch growled, but you shan't get cheeky. And four-five-six, the meter-long leather whip struck Alisha's bottom again. Not too harsh, but well-aimed.
Listen, the witch said (and she'd thought long about this line), let's make a deal: you heat him up properly with your pretty young body...

No! Tim cried desperately from the cage.
...and I, the witch continued, will be so generous as to give him back to you after thorough use and let you both go.
Alisha had to restrain herself from cheering out loud. And from laughing, above all. What an opportunity to get off cheaply, to really show Tim, and to give him some relief without him getting in trouble. That the witch would have her way with him—he'd survive that. Out of sight, out of mind.
Alisha bit her lips. Your word? she asked, still clamped between the witch's legs.
Witch's honor!
Ow-Ow-Ow-Ow! Alisha unexpectedly got four more on her bottom, making it ten. Why those? she asked reproachfully, rubbing her backside. The welts would surely be visible for three days.
So you don't forget who's the mistress here, the witch said. Now wash yourself thoroughly so he gets properly fired up by your sight. But only your face, so he can smell you well!
Alisha hurriedly left the house to wash her face at the nearby stream.
Then the witch went and fetched the small clay vessel containing the strange square blue pill and a cup of water. With both, she approached Tim in his cage.
Here! Swallow this!
She held out the pill and the water cup.
And woe if you don't!
Tim refused.
The meter-long leather whip lashed like lightning. One! Two! Three!
Well? The witch raised an eyebrow. Not a bit angry; she knew very well who'd win in the end.
Tim rubbed his calves but still refused.
The witch slowly drew back, harder this time. It looked ominous.
Wait, wait! Tim cried, his face contorting. You'll win anyway, he groaned, so I'll spare myself the punishment.
The winner's smile was that of a woman accustomed to power, utterly sure of herself.
Tim swallowed the pill, but the witch wasn't foolish and watched closely, even making him stick out his tongue afterward.
Good man! the witch praised, giggling. Then she added: It won't harm you, you won't regret it, others would pay dearly for it. Wait and see, wait and see, half an hour at most...
The last words (Wait and see, wait and see, half an hour at most...) were a great cruelty, for Tim likely suspected the secret effect of that blue pill. And just as a pestle sometimes refuses to rise under pressure and the watchful eyes of a wife, now, because it *shouldn't*, it absolutely refused to stay down. So Tim fought until he was sweating. Alisha's breasts came to mind, bouncing as she walked; a sud-

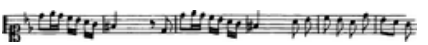
den breeze seemed to carry a hint of her lap's scent; her feminine hips forced themselves into his thoughts. In short: poor Tim suffered torments. What you absolutely mustn't have makes your mouth water most, especially when you know it's coming at you relentlessly, like a flying roast chicken in the land of Cockaigne.
About a quarter of an hour passed.
Alisha returned from washing, water still glistening on her face.
Tim suppressed a groan.
His pestle did *not* rise. It was a monumental effort!
But the witch wasted no time. Come here, Lisel! she demanded, grabbing Alisha by her hair.
Ouch! Alisha cried. Why?
But the witch pulled her toward the mysterious room with the open door. No need to be afraid, she commented. What's coming now will please you more than you'd like!
She dragged Alisha over the threshold, and once inside, slammed the door shut with a kick.
Tim needs a bit more rest now, she said to Alisha, but you'll undergo a little treatment for my pleasure and yours, to prepare you for what's coming in a quarter of an hour.
What could it be? What did the witch want?
The witch pulled Alisha to a large wooden frame made of sturdy, well-smoothed beams, perhaps the size of a table or bed, adorned with ornaments. Between the beams wasn't just air but numerous flat, wide leather straps stretched side by side, like zebra stripes. She laid Alisha face-down on it, adjusting her so her head rested surprisingly comfortably and her breasts dangled freely between the leather straps. She bound Alisha's arms, hiked up her skirt, spread her legs, and tied them too. Alisha felt anxious but still couldn't fathom what was to come. The walls weren't just hung with ropes, chains, and all sorts of restraints, but also whips, switches, and other torture devices.
No need to be frightened, my Lisel, the witch said, giving her a gentle pat on her bare bottom. All this equipment is only felt by good people if they explicitly wish it. Good people! You're good, aren't you?
Yes, Mistress, slipped out of Alisha's mouth.
That's a good girl, the witch said almost tenderly. Listen, my Lisel. Later, you'll set Tim ablaze for me so I can use him to quench my own fire. But you can't do that if you act like a block of wood. So I'll prepare you a bit, and Tim shouldn't see this, as he mustn't burn through his own flame too soon.
Then the witch began to stroke Alisha's neck! Yes, stroke! She did it so gently that shivers ran through Alisha's body. Damn it, how easily aroused one was here! Once again, the witch had caught Alisha off guard, as the sensations crept in

through secret paths, and Alisha couldn't help but purr.
Up and down, left and right, neck, back (where she could reach despite the dress), arms, legs... then the bottom, from there to the inner thighs... and, and... no, the fingers kept their distance from the blossoming, moistening rose, then moved back up the body. The touch grew firmer, massaging Alisha's body thoroughly, then softened again, a caress, delicate movements... neck... bottom... this time a bit closer to the rose between her thighs, which had briefly dozed but now awoke and began to bloom again. The fingers circled the inner thighs, this time coming very close... and there! Finally, a touch. The backs of the fingers now brushed over the nectar-dampened flower, which began to open, played with it, dipped into the calyx, swiftly slipped out, played outside, found the moist, dark calyx again, opened it slightly, toyed with the petals, and finally found a firm little point that had been hiding among them but now cheekily peeked out. A careful circling of this point, a gentle movement of the flower surrounding it, back and forth, trembling, vibrating, pausing for a moment...
Alisha melted. This was sorcery. She'd pay money for this. She forgot where she was and wanted only one thing: for it never to stop.
But the witch took care not to respond to the arching of Alisha's bottom and met the eager trembling of her pelvis with a moment of restraint. In short: she stoked Alisha's fire with all the artistry she possessed but allowed no more. She was to glow, not burn.
Alisha finally begged: Please, please, Mistress, do more. Not so gentle, please more!
No! the witch whispered softly in her ear, continuing. Wait for it!
But before the mood could shift, the quarter hour was over, perhaps a bit more, no need to quibble, but in that time, the witch had used her sorcery to turn Alisha into a lustful, willing slave. And consider that Peridëis, with its peculiar effect, had long been gnawing at her hidden little point, which in her lap was now insistently claiming its rights. Poor Alisha.
The witch untied Alisha and opened the door to the room.
Now hop to it! the witch urged, pulling her by the hair toward Tim. Alisha was in a kind of trance.
We won't even speak of poor Tim.
Now, the witch said, Lisel, I want to see a unique dance that makes his seed practically leap from his pestle on its own. The witch grabbed Alisha's chin and looked down at her with that strangely captivating gaze, deep, very deep into her eyes. Alisha felt entirely different again.
Alisha slowly broke away from the witch and looked at Tim with a desirous, heated, half-absent gaze.
No! Don't do it! Tim pleaded, but his pestle was already noticeably rising.
Alisha, with a vacant look and wet eyes, let her dress slowly slide to the floor.

Slowly, piece by piece.
The witch clapped her hands, and suddenly music sounded from somewhere. That strange music again, accompanied by powerful drumbeats.
Alisha let the dress fall completely and took a step toward Tim. She licked her lips and kept her mouth sensually open. She cupped her breasts, kneading them slowly, swaying to the rhythm of the music.
Please don't!
Alisha swayed her hips, moving to the music's rhythm, first to the side, then back and forth as if in coitus. But slowly and demanding.
Tim stared at Alisha, spellbound. There! Now he'd forgotten himself, and his pestle rose to its full size, becoming fully firm and completely stiff.
Alisha danced, turned, caressed herself, licked her lips, sighed, revealed hidden places, lifted her breasts, let them sway, showed her moving bottom, bent over, leaned forward, stood up again, let him smell her sweaty armpits, danced, danced, danced...
Meanwhile, unnoticed by Tim, the witch had crept beside the cage and, with a swift motion, wrapped a sturdy leather strap around him, yanking him toward the wooden wall that closed off the back of the cage. While Tim tugged at this strap, she'd already fastened a second and a third. The witch was experienced, and it was clear no amount of strength would help. There! Now she had him tightly bound to the wooden back wall of the cage. She unlocked the cage. But Tim seemed entirely captivated by Alisha's dance anyway. And behold, the bars could be removed—Tim clearly wasn't the first to render service to the witch. But now what? Ah! Even more, the wooden back wall could be tilted backward. A trap, built to subdue resistant men.
And now Tim lay on his back on a table, bound and helpless.
But what was this? His pestle had softened ever so slightly in its swelling.
That needed fixing.
Lisel! The witch needed to say no more, and Alisha was already there, offering Tim her long-moist, wide-open rose, hidden in her lap, for him to smell. Tim greedily inhaled the intoxicating scent and by now had likely forgotten what was happening. Alisha crouched over Tim's face so he could only see her curled rose and her body above, while the witch seized the chance to climb onto Tim as well —but facing backward, with her face toward his feet! Huzzah, she cried, that's the witch's way! She let Tim's now rock-hard shaft slide into her and began riding him wildly, which, in the witch's way, went surprisingly well.
Alisha, for her part, fell into a frenzy, rubbing her lap against Tim's mouth, while the witch behind her back reveled in his firmly swollen shaft. And as the witch moved faster and her moans heralded an approaching climax...
...a sudden, overwhelming jealousy seized Alisha, and her frenzy abruptly ended.
It was like a splash of cold water, and her arousal turned to anger in an instant.

Anger at the witch, but tender sympathy for Tim.
Trembling, Alisha lifted her lap from Tim's face and stepped down from the table.
The witch, in her frenzy, noticed nothing and was looking in the opposite direction anyway. She rode screaming, as if the wild hunt were after her.
Wait, Alisha thought coolly, *now* comes my revenge, and who knows if you can even be trusted, you wretch. Alisha carefully moved behind the raging witch, whose lap thrust up and down rapidly while her cries of lust filled the house. Faster and faster her lap moved, louder and louder her moans and shouts, until she finally released in one long, piercing scream, her twitching lap shifting to a deep, pressing rhythm.
But this had long stirred the uncontrollable realms in Tim's soul, and so it happened that what he had honestly tried to hold back had been building irresistibly in his loins; it surged from the sides toward his pestle, coming closer and closer, he tried with all his might to stop it, he panted, he held his breath, and... finally, it could no longer be prevented...
But at that moment, Alisha leaped forward with a mighty bound and shoved the witch off Tim in a high arc. As the witch flew, Alisha's mouth enveloped Tim's penis (it was all she could manage), and his seed pulsed from his penis deep into Alisha's mouth, again and again, as Alisha instantly swallowed Tim's life essence and sucked once more. Tim's penis was so deep in her mouth that Alisha could hardly say how it tasted, so long as none of it was wasted.
There, you old witch, Alisha hissed afterward. You got none of his life essence, nothing! Not a single drop! I have all his seed in me, do you hear?
The witch lay whimpering with rage and disappointment on the floor, too out of breath to do anything against Alisha.
Alisha didn't hesitate and quickly freed Tim from his restraints. Come, she cried, let's get out of here fast. And she quickly kissed him on the mouth. Then she hurriedly gathered her dress, grabbed Tim's things from the corner, not forgetting his uniform belt with whip and rope, and dragged the dazed Tim with her out of the gingerbread house.
Into the washtub! Alisha shouted, tossing the clothes in and pulling Tim, who more fell than stepped into the tub. Then Alisha jumped in herself.
Fly! she called—and behold, the washtub rose into the air with both of them...
To where the azure paved path continues! Alisha commanded—and behold, the washtub set off leisurely.
Alisha was anxious that the witch might be faster, as the washtub flew quite slowly and just above the treetops. But they were lucky; the witch didn't come.
And so they flew and flew, and behold, after some time, the azure paved path became visible again among the trees.
Alisha barked at the washtub: Further, further! Fly along the path! And the

washtub swayed on, further and further.
Finally, Alisha believed the witch could no longer catch them and, breathing a sigh of relief, took in the beautiful landscape of Peridëis again. The red of the evening sun (standing directly overhead!) and the steep valley cliffs, where the glint of streams could be seen now and then, covered with ever-different plants.
But suddenly, the washtub swiftly descended, hit the ground hard, and broke apart.
What's wrong? Alisha asked Tim, who had sat silently beside her.
It won't fly anymore, Tim replied. Witches' brooms, washtubs, and carpets only fly a certain distance. Then they get brittle and break.
Pity, Alisha said.
Take comfort, Tim said. They're not comfortable and slow too. There's a better way to travel, but it's not an option yet.
Should we walk a bit more to gain some distance? Alisha asked.
Yes. Let's get away from here first, Tim replied. Let's walk at night for a change.
Are you feeling a bit recovered? Alisha asked, concerned. She didn't know how such an ordeal would affect a man living in celibacy. And Tim already had another full erection. Who knows what kind of magic potion the witch had given him.
Oh yes, I'm fine! Tim answered. And I feel a bit relieved too. Come, we should get dressed and go.
Alisha laughed. That's not an answer.
No, really. And thanks, by the way. That one (he looked at his penis) is calming down and found the treatment quite memorable. But don't make a habit of it.
Alisha smirked. Victory! she thought. Total victory! Even her lap made no further demands—the satisfaction she'd gained was apparently enough. Happily, she put her dress back on, adjusted the skirt, and pulled her breasts over the large neckline. Hm, she thought, it did look splendid, the way the witch had draped her breasts over the dress. But wait, she thought, mine will grow too.
And they set off again. Along the azure paved path. Every now and then, Alisha glanced at Tim's trousers, which left his penis exposed. It was still stiff, an unusual sight while walking. What a magic powder, she thought! But eventually, it subsided, for no spell lasts forever.
Meanwhile, it gradually grew dark. But what does dark even mean? What was called the sun during the day shone in Peridëis at night in a different hue as the moon. Much dimmer, of course, and a different color. There was enough light not to stumble. So they strode briskly, both enjoying the pleasant night air, and Alisha experienced once more how one could walk through the forest at night feeling lively and in high spirits. They only paused once when Alisha felt the urge to relieve her milk.



The Witch's Leap

After several days of wandering along the azure paved path, a large, golden-glimmering pillar rose from the ground on a tiny hill in the middle of the valley. It was nearly perfectly round with an equally round top, perhaps five or six meters tall, and might have had a diameter of about one meter. The golden pillar sparkled magnificently in the sunlight. Strangely, though, the path made a very wide arc around this pillar.

Just fool's gold, Tim said. I'm not surprised the path avoids it. People have a superstitious fear of fool's gold because they associate it with magic.

Oh, Alisha laughed. That's something.

Exactly. But do you know what we can do here?

No. Not *me*.

Now Tim laughed. No, the pillar's too big for that. But it's so impressive that we can practice the witch's leap here, the flash. The real way. Without a crystal.

Alisha looked up along the pillar. He was right. It was so striking that you'd remember it vividly after just one glance.

What do I need to do? Alisha asked.

First, take your fool's gold crystal out of your pocket to avoid any mishaps.

Alisha handed him the crystal.

Alright, Tim said, look at the pillar very closely and memorize even small details that stand out to you. Keep all that as an image in your mind. Then close your eyes.

Alisha did so and then closed her eyes.

Keep your eyes closed, Tim said. I'll lead you a few meters away now.

Alisha felt Tim guide her along the azure paved path. Hard to say how far.

Tim stood behind Alisha.

Then Tim said: Now picture the pillar as vividly as possible, as intensely as you can. Relax, be calm and relaxed, loosen your muscles, think of nothing but the pillar.

And he added loudly: And now wish yourself to the pillar as intensely as you can.

Nothing happened.

No matter, Tim said, it almost never works right away. Open your eyes!

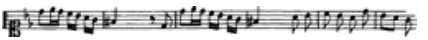
They went back to the golden pillar.

Once there, Tim said: Imagine all this—Peridëis, the pillar, yourself here—is really a dream or a theater or even a virtual reality like in a utopian novel. That way, you can better develop the feeling that the leap will actually work. You're like the one pulling the marionette's strings, not the marionette itself, helplessly at the mercy of events. It's just a mental crutch. Which of these examples would work best for you?

None of them. More like magic and fairy tales and witches.

Really? OK, let's go with that. Then imagine you're really in a fairy tale, and you're a witch, a real witch, and you'll vanish from here and reappear next to the golden pillar. Now look at the pillar intensely again and close your eyes.
They tried again.
And again.
And again.
And again.
When Alisha began to doubt herself, Tim demonstrated. He looked at the pillar intently for a moment, turned, and walked a hundred meters away with open eyes but an inward gaze, and...
Green flash! Bang! Sulfur stench and cloud!
Tim's uniform fell to the ground as he vanished in a flash and reappeared stark naked right beside the pillar a split second later.
Stark naked. Alisha felt exactly that, because while Tim often saw her naked, it wasn't the same for her. He almost always wore that uniform. Only his penis was exposed. At least she could track its own whims that way, but Tim completely naked was a whole different matter. Perhaps Tim sensed this and didn't want to provoke her.
Alisha clapped in applause, not letting on how much Tim's sight moved her.
Tim quickly ran to grab his uniform. After he put it on, they took a break. When they finished eating, Alisha lay on her side and offered a breast for drinking. Tim lay beside her and drew her nipple into his mouth. As Alisha felt her milk surge toward the nipple, she gave in to the urge for relief and let her finger slip to her lap. It had to be.
Eventually, Alisha reached the Great Relief. That's what Tim had once called it.
Eventually, Tim had drunk her breasts dry. His penis stood steeply erect.
Should I do something? Alisha asked apologetically. I couldn't help it.
No, nothing at all, Tim said. It's fine as it is. Never forget, I chose this willingly. And by the way: distraction helps best. Come on—let's keep going!
It was still an interesting sight to see Tim doing normal things with a steeply erect penis.
They practiced. Again and again.
And finally:
Green flash! Bang! Sulfur stench and cloud!
Alisha heard Tim's cheering from quite a distance. She opened her eyes. She was 50 or 60 meters away from Tim!
Tim came running, thrilled: You did it! You're amazing!!!
It wasn't as if Alisha had landed right beside the pillar, but still...
They practiced for a few more hours. It didn't always work, and sometimes Alisha even landed right next to the pillar, but usually only roughly somewhere nearby.

Eventually, Tim was satisfied. They spent the night beside the pillar, and Tim milked her breasts by hand for the first time in a while, to her delight. Alisha admitted she particularly liked that. Afterward, Tim allowed her to cuddle up to him and pleasure herself. But when her hand wandered under his uniform, he gently placed it back on her own body, and Alisha murmured an apology.
The next morning, they chipped new crystals from the wall of one of the many underground passages leading into the valley's cliffs. You never know. Tim didn't want to chip them from the pillar—natural beauties shouldn't be damaged. Then they set off again.

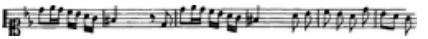


The Lake

A few days later, the valley opened up, the azure paved path sloped slightly downward, and behold, a large, dark blue, glittering, magnificent lake blocked their way, with the azure paved path leading straight into the water, as if it ran right through the lake.
Does it continue here? Alisha asked.
It continues here, Tim confirmed.
Then I want to swim! Right now! Alisha cheered, ran straight to the lake's shore, threw off her dress, and jumped in naked.
It was wonderful! Alisha had long felt like she was glued to her dress. The water wasn't too warm, not too cold, but definitely warmer than the swimming lakes back home in summer usually were. Alisha swam out into the lake.
Tim, who had to carry the gear, followed more leisurely, but upon reaching the lake, he shed his bailiff uniform and jumped in.
Wonderful! Alisha called again, swimming toward Tim. They swam and dove until both were somewhat exhausted and refreshed.
Alisha crawled on all fours through the shallow shore water and decided to stay seated in it. Only her head stuck out above the water as she gazed across the lake. Tim sat beside her. Together, they silently admired the beautiful landscape along the lake's shore.
On the opposite shore, Alisha saw a white beach, and behind it, the dense jungle that usually filled the valley. To the right, the lake was bounded by a steep cliff, with water cascading down into the lake at several points. To the left, the lake was also bordered by a high cliff, but right in the middle was a wide gap. In it, she saw broad terraced steps, narrowing as they ascended. Where they led wasn't visible from here. Tim had promised Alisha they'd make a detour there, so it wasn't hard for her to curb her curiosity and enjoy the moment.
They sat in the water, took in the scenery, chatted about this and that, and relaxed. As they talked, Alisha let her fingers play over various parts of her body. First,

her toes (who doesn't pick between their toes?), then they wandered to different parts of her body, especially the crevices (also quite sensible), eventually playing a bit between her thighs, which is only human, but at some point, her fingers ended up at the fold beneath her breasts, where Alisha found nothing to grasp since her breasts floated weightlessly in the water, already giving it cleansing access, so even women overly obsessive about hygiene would have found nothing left to clean. Thus, half out of boredom and half out of desire, Alisha's fingers tugged a bit at her nipples. Why not? The act had an aesthetic quality: a white underwater fountain sprayed out, dispersing in the clear lake water as a pretty white cloud. Alisha tried it again and again. Not an uninteresting game—an underwater camera would be perfect! But eventually, Alisha stopped, leaned her upper body back slightly, gazed into the distance, and dozed in the pleasant water.
But suddenly, Alisha shrieked: she'd noticed a quick movement in the water and then felt something warm close around the nipple of her right breast, instantly sucking hard. As she jumped up in alarm, the same happened to her left breast. First warm, then immediately sucking fast. What was that?!
Alisha had sprung up and now stood in the shallow water, everything above her lap exposed.
Two blue fish with large, round eyes and thick, kiss-like lips hung from her breasts. Very pretty fish, perhaps thirty centimeters long, well-rounded but not spherical.
They were so lovely that Alisha didn't dare yank them off her breasts. But they sucked vigorously, clearly after the sweet milk to be had from Alisha's breasts.
What wonders Peridëis held!
And suddenly, Alisha felt wonderful.
Very... very... pleasantly wonderful.
Warm shivers ran through her body, lethargy overtook her, and the world around her seemed increasingly distant and unimportant. Gentle shivers surged through her body toward her breasts, accompanied by sensations of desire that didn't leave her lap untouched. Everything became very colorful. And all sounds were like dreamily beautiful music. Alisha staggered toward the shore.
Only faintly, from far away, did Alisha notice Tim speaking to her. He was probably trying to calm her.
Somehow, she ended up in his arms, and he carried her somewhere.
Where to?
Didn't matter.
Some kind of boat.
Uh-huh.
Steps.
Alright.
Then rooms.

A bed.
A cozy bed in a wonderful room.
What did the room remind her of?
Didn't matter.
How beautiful this feeling was.
And the blue fish were so pretty!
Let the pretty blue fish keep sucking... at her breasts.
Just don't fall asleep, so she wouldn't miss any of these wonderful waves of pleasure in her body.
A deep rhythm, more waves of delight... and Alisha fell asleep.
Foggy phases of half-wakefulness followed, in a deep trance, tied to endless pleasure triggered by the incredibly beautiful blue fish that suckled at her breasts without letting go.
Dimly, Alisha noticed a cup of water being held to her lips; she drank mechanically, ate what was offered, smiled gratefully at Tim for taking care of her, and then sank back into the world of pleasure-dreams.



The Temple of Anka

After three days, Alisha woke up again. Tim had told her that much time had passed. Alisha felt groggy and had a slight hangover. She looked down at her body: the pretty blue fish with the big eyes and kiss-like mouths were gone. Or had it all been a dream? No, apparently not, because her breasts felt as if they'd had tons of weight hanging from them, been wrung through a laundry mangle, then inflated like balloons, and then sucked dry again. And then all over again. Something like that. But they showed no signs of it. They looked noticeably fuller; "plumper" might be an even better word. Especially at the sides.
What was that? Alisha asked.
Fish, Tim replied. Just fish. Sometimes they get a frenzy. Like when we suddenly crave chocolate. Sorry I didn't warn you. But don't worry, the fish aren't dangerous... just a bit... intense. I'm really sorry, but you'd have met them eventually anyway or even sought them out deliberately. Probably some milk leaked from your breast and attracted them.
A memory surfaced, and Alisha grumbled. Guess I'm to blame, she said. I was playing with them, squeezing out milk with my fingers. It looked funny, how the milk clouds spread underwater.
That must've been it, Tim said. You know, the fish in Peridëis live in a kind of symbiosis with mammals. For them, the milk is probably just a treat. And on the other hand, there are women who seek out these fish on purpose.
The fish are like a drug?

Yeah, that too. To keep you from tearing the fish off your breast or hurting it, it releases a strong drug. Maybe that even boosts the milk flow a bit[53]. You must've felt the drug's effect pretty clearly.
More than clearly.
I'm a bit jealous of the experience, since these fish don't bother with men. There's other stuff... but let's not go there, it's a different topic. Anyway, the fish latch on for about three days and live off you.
Even out of the water?
Yes, even out of the water. After about three days, they let go on their own. I took both fish back to the lake.
But what if no one's there to do that?
Without me, you wouldn't have gotten far from the lake.
It would've been a shame about those lovely fish, Alisha said quietly, though her hangover didn't put her in the best mood.
There are women completely obsessed with these fish, Tim replied, but be careful: it can become a serious addiction. More than one woman has lost herself to it, wasting away to skin and bones.
And then?
Basically, the breasts swell to meet the demand signaled at the nipples. But only as long as your body can safely provide. Once your body is seriously strained, the breasts dry up[54], the fish lose interest and let go. But such women often fall into a cycle of binge-eating orgies alternating with phases of dull, drugged lethargy until Peridëis kicks them out if they're visitors. Peridëis natives, of course, can't be kicked out; they're a fixed part of Peridëis. The fish are even caught and kept in hidden ponds to have them ready for these orgies.
But why doesn't anyone do something about it?
Tim shrugged. In Peridëis, every land is different; every town, every village has its own customs. And if you live in the wild or in a remote cottage, you do whatever you want anyway. So it's your own choice. But there are people who take pity and pick up such women. On the other hand, the fish do have real value, because they strongly stimulate the breasts, greatly boosting milk production. For some women, their milk output has jumped from half a liter to two full liters in just three or four days thanks to the fish!
Really!?

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53 By the way: That breasts, especially nipples, are erogenous zones is both motivation and reward. Pure agitation wouldn't drive most mothers to breastfeed, and animals without reason can't be agitated. Thus, another system is needed to reward the mother. The use of these zones by men or for relationships came later evolutionarily.

54 This is true. Even women in very poor countries have sufficient and good milk (exception: extremely one-sided vegan diets). But in life-threatening situations, like extreme hunger or trauma, milk production stops for self-protection.

Oh yes, we can try it later. You'll admit that's a real benefit of these fish.
Alisha grumbled: If only it weren't for the hangover...
You can't be in a three-day binge without consequences. But some exercise and a cool shower will do the trick, and the hangover will be gone. Come, there's a good washing spot back there, then we'll eat something, I'll relieve you of your milk, and you'll feel much better afterward!
Alisha only now properly looked around. Where are we?
In a rock temple. Remember? At the top of the great terraced staircase. Look out the window!
Alisha got out of bed and stepped to the ornately carved wooden lattice that separated the cave from the outside. What she saw reminded her of a temple from ancient Egypt. They were about ten meters above the lake; to the right, the terraced steps led down to the lake; directly in front of them, the steps ended at a plateau, perhaps thirty by thirty meters square, paved with yellow stones. About in the middle stood a wooden pole, maybe two and a half meters tall, with a metal ring near the top. Were sacrifices performed here, with victims bound to that ring?! At the back of the plateau, Alisha saw a raised stone throne. Several steps below it was a square altar table with a thick cover, easily accessible by a few steps. Whoever sat on the throne would have an excellent view of the lake and the wide staircase leading up to the plateau. The altar, like the throne, was built of yellow stone but covered with a thick black-and-gold embroidered cloth. The back end of the plateau was lined with tall columns, and on either side, about two meters up, was a row of windows with ornate wooden lattices. Alisha and Tim were looking out through one such window. The lower end of the terraced steps bordered the water, interrupted by a few block-like stones that might serve as bollards for tying boat ropes. The terraced staircase was framed by the usual high cliffs that lined Peridëis's countless valleys. At the height of the staircase, Alisha saw drawings on the cliff walls. They were too far to make out details, but they were clearly motifs from ancient Egypt.
The magnificent lake was only partially visible from here. The cliffs on the opposite side of the valley might be a kilometer away, and despite the limited view, Alisha could at least see that the lake spanned the valley from one side to the other.
But there wasn't much time to look around, as Tim pulled Alisha through a passage at the end of which there was no luxurious waterfall, but at least a plentiful spring. Tim substituted a shower with a wooden bucket, which he repeatedly filled and poured over Alisha's head.
The hangover quickly faded, and Alisha realized she was ravenous.
Hunger. Hunger? Was there something about that?
Good heavens! Alisha exclaimed. Three whole days! Don't you desperately need milk?

As for that, we got really lucky, Tim replied. One more day, and it would've gotten dicey for me. I should start milking an emergency reserve in the future. I didn't expect to get into such a tight spot so quickly. Still...
Come! Alisha said, lifting her right breast toward him with her hand. Drink! she said.
As if Tim had been waiting for that signal, he pressed Alisha against the rock wall, grabbed the offered breast with both hands, and instantly latched on. Alisha exhaled sharply, feeling the milk surge immediately. Her free breast reacted too, releasing its milk where their bodies pressed together. The pressure of their bodies seemed to amplify it, as a lot of milk seemed to flow. Tim slid his left arm around Alisha's back while his right arm darted between her legs, gripping her bottom. He lifted her, never letting her breast leave his mouth. Carrying Alisha in his arms and drinking greedily, he hurried back to the sleeping chamber they'd been in before. Had he been starving the whole time? In the chamber, he laid her back on the bed, still without releasing her breast, and slid beside her. He sucked greedily, swallow after swallow, and Alisha, feeling intense pressure in her free breast, struggled to get him to empty the other one too. Then she managed, and the other breast got its due. Strange, Alisha thought, that the breast still felt pressure even after losing so much milk on its own. The bedspread beneath them was soaked, and so was her body.
Finally, Tim eased off.
"Pleasantly empty breasts," Alisha thought, and they felt that way when she touched them. Odd. She'd never had such a thought about her breasts before. Certainly not as something beautiful, pleasant, or desirable. She felt pride.
You can use the spilled milk for skincare, Tim advised.
That's an idea. There was indeed a considerable amount in Alisha's belly creases and navel, which Tim first rubbed on her face and then over the rest of her body. Alisha helped him. The milk dried quickly, and the initial sticky feeling turned into a pleasant skin tautness.
Cleopatra had nothing better, Tim laughed. The Roman empress Livia supposedly had thousands of German and Gallic women brought to squirt their milk into silver vats. And Livia bathed in it with other lascivious Roman women[55]. But now come, I'll show you who at least provided first aid for me.
Alisha grew curious. But... where was her dress? Alisha looked around searchingly.
I had your dress washed, if that's what you're looking for, Tim commented, catching her glances, but you're slowly going to need a new one. The color has faded quite a bit, and some spots are a bit worn out. Tim reached into a chest, pulled out the washed dress, and handed it to Alisha.

55 Livia: 58 BCE–29 CE, wife of Emperor Augustus. See Deutsches Wörterbuch (German Dictionary) by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, entry "Milchbad."

Alisha turned the dress this way and that. What a shame, she thought as she inspected it, it looked so pretty.
Tim helped her put it on, and when they were done, he commented: It looks much more splendid on you, but we might still look for something new at some point.
Both walked silently back through the rock passage. Tim in his strange uniform with a whip at his side instead of a saber and with his penis exposed, and she in her dress, its most striking adornment being her bare breasts. When Tim opened one of the wooden doors at the end of the passage, Alisha looked upon a richly set table... and to her surprise: another woman. Alisha let out a cry of astonishment.
Now, now, the other woman laughed, I'm not a ghost and not dangerous either. She performed a curtsy in front of Alisha. A perfect one, placing the toes of her right foot behind her left leg. And in doing so, her hands slightly lifted the skirt of her dress. Oh yes, the dress, like Alisha's, left her breasts bare. But the dress, as well as the headpiece and hairstyle, fit the surroundings: ancient Egypt.
Alisha tried a curtsy too but didn't quite manage it.
Both women and Tim burst out laughing at the same time. You'll have to practice that curtsy, the woman said cheekily, Tim taught you that very sloppily.
I can't do everything, Tim grumbled. By the way, the curtsy is the usual greeting for women here.
I noticed that myself and did it myself, Alisha said cheekily.
It was fine. But I can't do it, so I can't show it either. Just don't get the idea to bow. That's only done as a gesture of submission to high-ranking people, because it signifies that you're ready to let that person milk you. Or on other formal occasions when you want to express that the other person has a right to your milk.
A right to my milk?! Alisha echoed.
For example, if you've sold it or something like that. In some areas, the bow then seals the deal. So don't ever think of bowing in everyday life.
Are there more things like that to watch out for? Tell me in time, so I don't end up having to give every man a blowjob just for opening my mouth.
The poor men—that'd be too much to ask! Tim said, laughing loudly, but got a solid jab in the side from Alisha for it. He got serious again: No, there aren't complicated rules, he said. To show you want to give milk, you directly indicate a milking motion at your breast with thumb and forefinger. That way, you're on equal footing or even control the situation. You can initiate sex just as clearly if you need it. Show it plainly, and that's it.
And what about that gesture where a woman lifts her breasts?
You mean the Peridëis symbol?
Yes.
Hm, tricky, Tim replied. It has a broader meaning. Basically, it signifies readiness to give milk, but it can also mean "Look, I'm a woman!" or "I have milk" or "I like you a lot," but not necessarily as an invitation. It's more of a general symbol

with fundamental significance.
Enough, the stranger woman interrupted. I'll just show you the curtsy one more time because it's embarrassing not to know it. But then we eat—you must be starving.
She showed Alisha the curtsy again, and after three or four tries, it worked passably.
Alisha's stomach was indeed aching with hunger by now. It might have been distracted before, but now it demanded its due, and nothing seemed more important to Alisha than stuffing herself full.
They took their places at the table, with Alisha sitting directly by the window opening that offered the best view outside. What was on the table hardly needs mentioning; it was the usual delicacies of Peridëis in abundance, though this time with an oriental flair.
The woman clapped her hands, and moments later, another woman scurried in. She wore only a fine golden chain around her waist, golden arm and ankle bracelets, and a tight golden collar, but was otherwise naked. A slave. The woman was very petite, almost boyish in build, with very small, pert-looking breasts adorned with numerous fine veins. These, along with her provocatively textured nipples, suggested that her breasts would squirt rather than drip when stimulated.
The servant brought a silver tray with a pot of fresh coffee and another pot of hot water, likely intended for making tea. Alisha had coffee served to her. But her dark suspicion of being offered milk freshly expressed from the servant's breast didn't come true. The milk was served in the usual way, in a clay jug. Still, the servant's breasts looked suspiciously like they held *a lot* of milk. Pfft! Alisha poured generously, half coffee, half milk. She was in Peridëis now—what did the customs of the mundane world matter if the servant gave good milk? She tasted it cautiously with pursed lips but was very pleased with the result.
The hostess hadn't missed Alisha's glances and commented: My slave gets only the finest food, and her body scent is intoxicating. Her milk is of the highest quality!
Thank you, Alisha said, acting as if it were the most natural thing in the world, but she blushed. And she let slip the entirely unnecessary remark that, when you think about it, drinking animal milk was the greater mess.
You can tell you're new to Peridëis, the hostess laughed, introducing herself: By the way, my name is Anka. At least here in Peridëis.
My father actually wanted to name me Alicia, Alisha replied, chewing, but my mother didn't like it, so they settled on Alisha. The name's supposed to come from India.
I come from Egypt, from so-called modern Egypt, the woman replied, and my real name is dead boring because it's so common in Egypt due to its religious significance. So it doesn't matter, if you know what I mean...

Of course, Alisha stammered, but do you believe in... are you... or not?
Muslim? A little. Like everyone. I choose what fits into my life and is good, and otherwise trust that Allah is jillin me.
Now it was Alisha who burst out laughing.
Then Alisha looked at the woman more closely with curiosity. The woman, who called herself Anka, was only slightly older than Alisha, perhaps in her mid-twenties. The woman, that is, Anka, wore pharaonic jewelry, a pharaonic dress, and the room was... naturally... furnished in a pharaonic style. However, the room seemed less austere than the pictures Alisha had seen before. A distinct oriental note was clearly present. The dress, on the other hand, didn't fit the oriental style at all: Anka's dress was made of white fabric so thin that it let her body lines show through. The dress began below the breasts, which remained bare, and was held in place by two ornate straps over the shoulders. It reached down to the ankles, where it ended in a black-and-gold border. Around the hips was a similarly black-and-gold belt, its ends hanging down in front.
Alisha blurted out: How did you get here, and what are you doing here?
Anka replied: Actually, I'm a trained Egyptologist. But to be honest, I'm a pretty lousy scientist. It's more that I have a pronounced aesthetic fascination for ancient times, a real fetish, especially for the pharaohs, as you can see, but also for other ancient peoples. And as it is with a fetish: I'm not really seeking the actual reality of the pharaonic era but have a specific fantasy about it. Like a writer. I pick out what I like and change what doesn't suit me. That wasn't clear to me from the start, but it became clear here. And what comes out of it, I live out here by letting the locals worship me as a temple priestess.
Alisha's eyes widened: You let them worship you? For real? Did you invent your own cult?
Pretty much, Anka answered, though I prefer to speak of "revealing" and "proclaiming." (Anka winked at Alisha.)
Got it, Alisha replied generously.
A better description, though, would be that it "happens to me." A lot of my life here I didn't consciously initiate; it's more like a dream: things suddenly happen that somehow relate to you, to hidden desires and yearnings, but also aggressions you carry inside. And then things happen. Sometimes things that make you think, shocked, "How reprehensible!" But they happen. And so you accept them. And you realize they're good for you. And then something happens that you don't like at all, and you wonder why it's happening now. And afterward, you realize it's good for you in the long run. And so things happen here, and I let them happen. My own world here is a bit Sumerian and a bit Egyptian culture, with myself at the center. You know, at first, I really wanted to work as an archaeologist, seriously, without any nonsense. But I only made it as a tour guide and wouldn't have gotten much further. If at all. Because even with a good husband, the family

makes sure you don't step out of line, and even with a good family, they'll bow to the neighbors' pressure. The fate of most women! Which wouldn't even be the problem if you could at least freely choose your fate. Anyway, I might have just been an average mother with a pharaoh hobby funded by the husband. But something happened: I had the incredible luck to discover a completely unknown rock tomb. Just a small one, already looted, probably centuries ago. Only the front part seemed to have been tampered with in modern times, as some images had been broken out of the wall, likely by people making money with dubious souvenirs. Otherwise, the tomb was unknown, and from the remaining images and various details, it quickly became clear that it was a very unusual tomb. The peculiarity of this tomb was entirely my own discovery, you know? Mine! I let my little brother in on it, and with his help, I painstakingly uncovered the tomb in complete secrecy. I couldn't have done it alone. My little brother adores me, so I couldn't have found a better helper. The problem was: if I had officially reported the find, that would've been the proper way, but they would've taken the tomb from me immediately, and others would've made a name for themselves with it. But it was *my* find and *my* chance, the kind you only get once in a lifetime. So I thought: explore and document it completely first, then announce it. Some things suggested, for example, that it wasn't just unusual but a kind of decoy tomb, not a real one, but a rather sloppy cover for something else. I mentioned the unusual wall paintings, but that wasn't the only thing. Too unique for a small tour guide. Well, and then something happened that should never happen to an archaeologist...

?!?!

Well, since my brother is very devoted to me but not to ancient history, I later continued digging inside the tomb alone. On one such occasion, the passage behind me collapsed. Normally, that would've been fine, as my little brother could've helped me or gotten help. But of all times, he was away traveling. And no one but him knew where I was. So, no help could be expected for the next two weeks. But at least I wasn't injured—I'd managed to flee deeper into the passage in time. Food and water weren't an issue at first. Since I'd been there often, I'd long set up a not-so-small depot with food, water, equipment, and even a sleeping spot. So, I searched to see if there wasn't some hidden path that could lead me out. I walked and crawled everywhere, examined everything. But at some point, I had to admit there was no way out. And there was no getting through the collapsed area either, as sand and stones kept sliding down. The collapse seemed quite large, with an entire sandhill above it. So far, so bad for me. So, I just sat around at first. To kill the boredom, I eventually started systematically rummaging through the tomb chamber again. The actual chamber wasn't particularly large and likely belonged to a high-ranking official, so not much new was to be expected. So, I looked at various details more closely. And then came a

surprise—I found a secret door to a side passage. And there was something unusual, something that didn't fit in a tomb chamber. The passage ended abruptly without another room. But the wall at the end of the passage bore this image of the woman holding her breasts out to the viewer. You know which image I mean? Yes! Alisha breathed, having forgotten her hunger, and listened intently.
Exactly that image was in the middle of this wall. And below it was a hieroglyphic text, a poem. But I already knew the poem from a temple of Ramses II, just in a different script, hieratic script. It's a love poem; I know it by heart:

The girl sings:

Am I not with you, my love?
Where has your heart wandered?
Should you not embrace me?
Does my kiss not reach you?
If you seek to touch my thighs and buttocks,
Is it hunger that drives you away?
Is it because you are a man of his stomach?—I have bread!
Is it clothing you lack?
I possess fine linens and bed sheets!
Or does hunger urge you to go?
Take my breasts, let their gifts sustain you.
One day embracing you, my beloved,
Is worth more than a hundred thousand spent wishing.[56]

This poem alone in my tomb chamber was a small sensation in itself, but I didn't understand its meaning back then and couldn't make sense of its connection to the tomb chamber and this secret passage. The stylized woman in the center, offering her breasts, could have suggested a religious significance, especially since pharaohs received their divinity through the milk of a goddess. They weren't anointed but suckled. Only what is interpreted as a kind of adoption act made the pharaohs godlike. But for one thing, the stylized woman didn't fit Egypt; she might belong more to the Sumerian realm or the Asherah cult of the Jews[57], so somewhere in the north. There, countless such depictions can be found in numerous variants, including as sculptures. But a goddess above a mundane love poem? And added to that, the walls of the passage repeatedly showed pairs—an adult man suckling at the breast of a large woman. I had seen such depictions fragmentarily in the outer part of the tomb, probably broken out by grave robbers. But here in the secret passage, the images of these pairs were completely intact,

56 See British Museum, Papyrus Harris 500, First Song Collection, First Song.
57 Asherah is Yahweh's wife in the Old Testament.

beautiful, and in full splendor.
So, Anka continued, below this enigmatic love poem, in the center the relief of the woman offering her breasts to the viewer, and on the passage walls to the right and left, numerous images of a man suckling at a woman's breast. And on top of that, the central image would have fit better in the Sumerian realm. So, it was very puzzling. And somehow, it all touched something deep inside me... it fascinated me more than anything else; it had nothing to do with my conscious mind, it stirred something archaic deep within me.
Well, and at some point, I finally touched the relief image at the end of the passage. Finally! I should've done that sooner. And what happened? My hand just disappeared into the wall! You should've seen my eyes. (Anka laughed loudly.) But I didn't dare go further at first. Fine. For an hour. Eventually, I told myself that dying or dying amounts to the same result, and this way, at least I wouldn't die foolishly. So, I took a determined step, and you know the rest from your own experience. I ended up in a magnificent room flooded with light, and, oh wonder, there was a water basin inviting me to bathe. I actually thought I'd found a way out, it was so bright there. But I found no way out and couldn't even figure out where the light was coming from. It was a kind of temple room with an altar table in the center, where I found the depiction of the woman holding out her breasts to the viewer several more times. And scattered around was a pile of junk, there's no other way to describe it. All sorts of stuff, left behind haphazardly, but all *very* old things.
Since I had to eat, I eventually went back to the secret passage and the tomb chamber and, of course, noticed that you could walk back and forth through the wall as you pleased. But the altar room was much nicer to live in, not to mention the convenient bathing option, so I brought all my stuff, including food, there.
Well, and it took another felt seven days before I lay on the altar table in the center of the room. Out of curiosity, boredom, or whatever. Bang, boom, and I was here in paradise. Naked, which was somewhat unusual for me given my upbringing, but happy. Happy! And my lap was practically bursting with joy. What a leap into paradise! I never want to go back to the world I came from. Nowhere! Visits to the outside world, sure, but only as far as they're unavoidable. Here, I'm free, relieved of all worries, and can even live out certain things I've discovered about myself that don't fit in the real world, you know? Here, I'm truly "me," without having to deny anything about myself. And I have *my* fun without spoiling other people's *their* fun in life, and other people have *their* fun without spoiling *my* fun. Do you know what my summary for Peridëis is?
?!
Anka giggled: "*Everybody* may be blessed in his own way, but *me* too." All those world-improvers in the mundane world should write that as paragraph one in their laws so the endless slaughter finally stops. You know, in the mundane world,

your own happiness almost always comes at the expense of others, at least when it's the bigger kind of happiness. Look at all those saviors of humanity—they always offer such a *huge* happiness that no other can exist beside it. And if you don't want to partake in that happiness, you get a smack. (A certain memory of her own homeland came to Alisha.) And they, of course, appoint themselves as infallible high priests of this happiness. It's not like that here. Because there isn't *one* happiness for all, because here, happiness is a plural word—everyone can live their very own happiness. Even as a couple, if you want, or a trio, however you like, which, as a common denominator, doesn't have to be less happiness, depending on the case. In Peridëis, thoughts aren't just free; they also take shape as tangible things. A dream made reality. Do you know what I did first?
???
Well, you know the effect Peridëis has on you, the physical, sensual effect. While I was still reeling from the first welcome orgasm, I brutally deflowered myself with both hands and two fingers each. What pain! I was still a virgin, you see, meant to marry respectably. I just roughly shoved the index fingers of both hands in, grabbed with two more fingers, and literally tore at myself until I was completely ripped open. Yes, ripped open, that's what I needed. And afterward, I felt good about it, even though it hurt like hell. It blended into a kind of pleasure-pain. It was an act of liberation... no, not that, an opening, an opening to all the things that had been closed off to me until then, freedom, even if it hurt...
...Can you imagine that?
No! Alisha laughed and shuddered. For me, it was gentler.
Anka winked at her. Well, Peridëis. It was the fulfillment of all dreams, even the really dark ones. Honestly, would you go back if you were a small Muslim woman with big insights but no big outsights? But now comes the punchline, do you know what happened next?
?!
When I returned to the mundane world for the first time, I was a virgin again! What a fiasco.
(Alisha and Tim clutched their stomachs, laughing.)
You can do whatever you want with your body in Peridëis, Anka continued once Alisha and Tim could somewhat listen again, but when you return to the mundane world, you get it back as it was before. A dream for teenagers who have to enter marriage as virgins. Not to mention that the paradise virgins in the Quran supposedly have their virginity constantly renewed. Allegedly, at least[58]. She laughed. I can confirm it, albeit in a modified form. At first, I didn't understand what was going on or why. But the symbolic meaning for me was that the old

58 Anka alludes to a Quran commentary by the Shafi'i Islamic scholar Ibn Kathir (c. 1300) on Surah 56:35–37, stating that paradise virgins' virginity is renewed each time. Followers of this scholar live, among others, in Lower Egypt.

morality held me with teeth and claws, refusing to accept the final step, wanting to pull me back... we'll tame you, you harlot. So, the next time in Peridëis, I tore my hymen again, and again, and again. I fought! I didn't want to fall back! Until I got a small scratch in Peridëis that vanished without a trace in the mundane world. That's when I finally used my brain and realized what I hadn't noticed about large breasts and milk: that Peridëis returns you to the mundane world exactly as it received you from it. Exactly so. This time, in the mundane world, the deflowering finally worked. The door that blocked my pleasure hole, the seal of propriety that lingered from the mundane world, was finally gone. Though being a Muslim woman would've been manageable in itself—the Quran has quite vivid promises there—but outdated local customs can bind you until you're completely immobile. Religion is just tacked on as a justification. Have you ever heard of female circumcision?

Only very generally, Alisha replied, confused, but nothing specific.

They cut everything off down there on little kids. For boys, the foreskin; for girls, the labia, and in the worst cases, even the clitoris, and they sew the hole shut. Even for boys, there are peoples who do much worse than just removing the foreskin—slitting it lengthwise, half-amputating, you name it. Of course, all in the name of so-called decency, and with us, they claim Islam demands it. Nonsense! It's nowhere in the Quran, neither for boys nor girls. Only a few poorly substantiated traditions mention it, and even those can be interpreted as softening a long-existing custom if it can't be entirely eliminated. Circumcision existed back in the time of the pharaohs, long before Islam. If you ask me, for both girls and boys, it's just about preventing masturbation as much as possible. A malicious, envious tradition—why should you have what I can't have? And so, it's usually women who demand the circumcision of girls and men who demand it for boys.

Alisha swallowed: Were you... are you... yourself...

Circumcised? No, Anka answered. I was lucky. We're from the south, where the extreme pharaonic circumcision is common, but my father was an educated man and prevented it. My slave Zelima, who was my best friend since childhood, wasn't so lucky—she got the full treatment back then.

In an unexpectedly commanding tone, Anka called: Zelima! Come here!

The slave hurried over, fell to her knees before Anka, and kissed her feet.

What does the mistress wish? she whispered, looking up at Anka from below.

Get up, Anka ordered, grabbed the slave, turned her around, and laid her across her own lap so that Zelima was on her back, with her legs facing Alisha and Tim. In the same motion, Anka seized her slave's thighs and spread her legs wide apart. The slave Zelima's privates were thus fully exposed for inspection.

She's completely sewn shut! Alisha exclaimed.

That would be one thing, Anka replied, holding her slave fast, but they also cut

away her clitoris and inner labia, so Zelima feels almost nothing down there now. Completely numb! She cried terribly back then. But...
Anka pulled Zelima up until their heads were level. As Zelima sat on her lap, Anka pressed her tightly against her own body with crossed arms. Her fingers glided over Zelima's small but peculiarly pert breasts, stroking her nipples. The slave closed her eyes, leaned back, and moaned softly.
...but, Anka continued quietly, Allah is merciful and has channeled the pleasure into her breasts, which have become all the more sensitive, granting her a delight that some women have never felt in their loins. When she reaches the peak of pleasure, it surges from her breasts through her entire body, down to her toes and the tips of her hair[59]. I knew as a pubescent girl that Zelima had been compensated for her misfortune this way. Because she showed me herself when we played secret games together. It was my greatest wish to the Peris in Peridëis to be allowed to bring Zelima here, and they permitted it without requiring any favor in return. To fetch her, I returned to the mundane world through another transition, and a bailiff helped me abduct Zelima.
But there's one thing I don't understand, Tim said. As far as I know... and you've experienced it too... in Peridëis, you receive your body in an undamaged form. So why is Zelima circumcised and sewn shut here?
Ask Zelima, Anka said.
Zelima, do you know? Tim asked Zelima.
Zelima didn't respond with words but ran her fingers over her breasts.
Aaaah, I'm starting to suspect something, Tim said. Maybe she receives so much satisfaction through her breasts that she doesn't want a change, fearing it might ruin the sensation in her breasts? He looked at Zelima questioningly.
But Zelima didn't answer and kept her eyes closed. And so, another mystery was added to Peridëis.
But why is she a slave? Alisha asked. Did you abduct her against her will?
What are you thinking! Anka replied, continuing to stroke the moaning slave's nipples as she spoke. She always had a desire for submission, and we played such games as girls. Secretly, of course. They'd never have let her go. Hence the abduction. When I told her about another, unreachable, distant world I wanted to move to permanently, she wanted to come along immediately, and it was her explicit wish to live as my true slave in this far-off, unreachable world, rather than just playing at submission. It's a complicated thing for both of us. Her role as a slave isn't just about pleasure; it also has a function. I enjoy her submission, but unlike Zelima, I'm drawn to men and need a man for satisfaction. At least occasionally. Zelima knows this and knows it can't be changed. But satisfaction isn't tenderness or closeness—those I seek and find only with Zelima. She's my

59 This is indeed reported, see, e.g., Youssef el-Masry: The Tragedy of Women in the Arab Orient. Munich, 1963, p. 43, and is also well-known in cases of paraplegia.

other half, and for physical satisfaction, I use men. Here in Peridëis, I was given a way to live all of this.
You *use* men? Alisha asked. Why the word "use"?
I want them subdued, and I want to set the terms. Hard satisfaction. Nothing more, but nothing less. That's what really gets me going. I have no idea if it has anything to do with Zelima always having submissive desires, or conversely, if we came together because our opposing desires attracted us to each other in the first place. Either way, in Europe, I might've become a dominatrix. It's not that I have anything against men, quite the contrary, and if there's any relevant childhood experience, it's probably just that my father was too kind and decent instead of giving some neighbors a good thrashing. Anka laughed.
But aren't you still a lesbian?
No, I don't think so. Men do attract me; I definitely desire the guys. Physically, too. Fresh male sweat, for example, drives me wild. Seeing men fight over me drives me wild. But I want to subdue them. With Zelima, I'm not a different person, but it's that only she can make me truly happy with my whole soul, and at the same time, I have the desire to make her happy. I *really* love her.
That sounded extraordinarily honest.
Anka stroked her slave's head and curtly commanded: Your breast!
The slave Zelima stood obediently, turning to face Anka. The looks between the two women seemed to transmit pure energy, and the air practically crackled. Anka sat Zelima astride her lap, pulled her close by both nipples, and began without hesitation to drink her slave's breastmilk fresh from the source.
Let's give them their intimacy! Tim said, with a good sense of the situation, grabbed the rather impressed Alisha, pulled her to an armchair at the far end of the room against the wall, pushed her into the seat, knelt between her legs, lifted a breast to his mouth with his hand, and thoroughly emptied both her breasts. Alisha sank back into a dreamworld of slaves and ancient Egyptians, entertaining the thought of being passed around as the greatest delicacy at a pharaoh's feast. Followed by expert conversation about the noble taste of her milk, the excellent condition of her breasts, and various tastings of her milk paired with different dishes, drinks, and spices.
Eventually, that was over too. Tim stood up first, and Alisha saw that his penis was steeply erect, while a wet spot on his chest clearly marked where her vulva had rested. Only then did Alisha fully realize how deeply she had been floating in realms of bliss and, above all, how it must feel for Tim. She whispered, alarmed: You poor thing! And somewhat uncertainly, she added: Are you okay?
When I think of the reward I'll get in the end, I manage pretty well, he replied, though with a slightly hoarse voice.
Your penis seems to have a different opinion? Alisha was back to her usual self, raising an eyebrow.

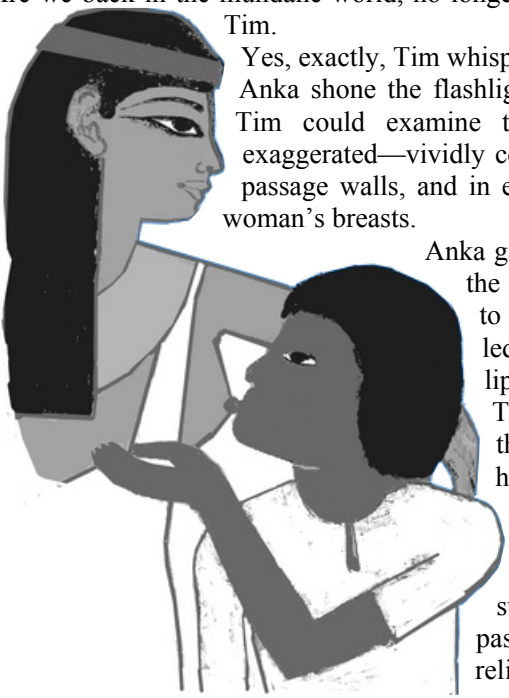
You little toad! Tim replied. If you keep staring at it, it definitely won't go down.
Alisha stared at it. Make it go down, she teased.
Tim had already grabbed her, sat in the armchair himself, laid Alisha face-down across his lap, lifted her skirt, and one-two-three, his flat hand clapped on Alisha's bottom. How convenient that there was no underwear under the skirt.
Ouch-Ouch-Ouch! Alisha laughed so hard that tears came to her eyes. From laughing. The little chastisement hadn't been entirely uninteresting, she thought to herself. But she didn't say it out loud. Instead, she went to the table, took a cup of clear water, and, finding no napkin, cleaned Tim's uniform jacket with a piece of bread and water. It worked quite well and defused the situation.
Meanwhile, Anka had also finished drinking her slave dry. She winked at Alisha, as if reading her thoughts. Then she squeezed a bit more milk from Zelima's breasts with her thumb and forefinger, spreading it like a salve over her own breasts. There, done! she said, and Zelima received a final smack on the bottom and was dismissed.
Turning to Alisha and Tim, Anka said: Isn't it wonderful to simply give in to your desires? Without a rude awakening, whether it's about yourself or others? I go back to the mundane world now and then, also to meet my little brother or my parents, but my real life happens here. Usually, I'm just in a library researching or visiting museums. Otherwise, my parents think I'm traveling the world. But most of the time, I enjoy myself here with Zelima. Or I wander through the land, expand my realm, explore it, admire it, have adventures, and, of course, enjoy the men throwing themselves at my feet and doing my bidding. The native men of Peridëis, that is. Your interesting bailiff, unfortunately, doesn't—when I asked him to, he gave me a few smacks on the bottom like he just did to you and then drained me without ceremony, the scoundrel.
Anka cast Tim such a lustful look with her black eyes that his seed could've spilled without further ado. But it didn't. Instead, Tim growled: Look at me like that *one more time*, and you won't be able to sit for three days, I promise you.
Anka rolled her eyes playfully. What a man! she breathed. And turning to Alisha: Won't you let me have him?
No! Alisha laughed. And now I know how he got his emergency snack in the meantime. Pilfering! By the way, how do you speak German so well?
You don't know?...
What don't I know?
Honestly?
But what?
Oh, Anka said, that's a bit of fun I'm not going to spoil now. Come, I won't say anything—instead, I'll show you something. Are you somewhat full?
Alisha stammered: What... uh... No, not quite yet...
Oh, come on, Anka said, you can eat more later. What I want to show you won't

take long. Come!
Anka clapped her hands again, and once more, her slave Zelima scurried in. We're going to the tomb for a bit, Anka said. Zelima nodded, and as Anka turned and started walking, Zelima motioned for Alisha and Tim to follow.
Alisha and Tim followed the two curiously.
The temple priestess Anka led Zelima, Alisha, and Tim down a corridor lit by torches. More passages and rooms followed until they finally reached a small, half-ruined room, almost a chamber, at the end of which stood a kind of stone altar. Above it was the familiar symbol of the woman holding out her breasts to the viewer. But beside it, hieroglyphic writing was painted on the wall.
Are the hieroglyphs real? Alisha asked.
No, Anka replied, it's a copy I made myself. Read it!
Alisha read a fragment of the text: ... *Take my breasts, let their gifts sustain you.*

She marveled. Why can I read the hieroglyphs?! That's the poem you were talking about earlier, isn't it?
Anka laughed: It is! And now, one after the other, lie naked on the altar.
Zelima first helped Anka undress, then Alisha and Tim, and finally, she shed her own whisper of clothing.
Alisha now lay naked on the altar table.
Boom!
When Alisha opened her eyes again, she found herself in a brightly lit pharaonic temple room. Before her was a large water basin with a mirror-smooth surface. Alisha immediately knew it was the transition place Anka had described.
Ouch! Alisha was roughly pushed aside as Anka appeared out of nowhere beside her.
Well, girl, you just shouldn't dawdle, she heard Anka say cheekily in English with an Arabic accent. Anka slid off the altar table and pushed Alisha down as well.
Alisha laughed.
One after the other, Tim and the slave Zelima appeared.
Anka placed her finger on her lips, signaling them to be quiet now.
Why? No matter.
Anka wasted no time, beckoned, circled the water basin, and vanished in an instant into a wall on the other side, adorned with the familiar Peridëis image of a woman. Alisha and Tim followed her, but the slave Zelima stayed behind at the altar.
Tingling. Diffuse dark red light. A wavering, strange environment, as if underwater. Alisha was through, and Tim followed her immediately.
Stale air greeted them as they emerged from the wall. Anka stood beside Alisha

and Tim, shining a flashlight. Alisha saw an underground passage before her, its walls painted with endless repetitions of pairs, each depicting a man drinking from a woman's breast.

Are we back in the mundane world, no longer in Peridëis? Alisha quietly asked Tim.



Yes, exactly, Tim whispered.

Anka shone the flashlight into the passage so Alisha and Tim could examine the wall paintings. Anka hadn't exaggerated—vividly colored images of pairs adorned the passage walls, and in each one, a man was suckling at a woman's breasts.

Anka gave them a few moments to take in the images. When Alisha took a breath to ask another question, Anka signaled silence again with a finger to her lips.

Then Anka aimed the flashlight at the wall behind them, which they had just passed through. Alisha saw the image of the breast-offering woman painted in vibrant colors on the wall. Not on a smooth surface like the images in the passage, but as a colorfully filled relief. To its left and right, numerous smaller images and hieroglyphic texts were painted on the wall. Anka pointed specifically to one of them. But moments later, she waved to urge them to return, didn't hesitate, and pushed Alisha toward the image of the breast-offering woman in the center. Alisha understood and stepped toward the image.

Tingling. Diffuse dark red light. A wavering, strange environment, as if underwater. Moments later, Alisha was in the transition room with the water basin and altar. Fresh air. She stepped aside and waited. Tim appeared shortly after her, followed by Anka, flashlight in hand, now turned off. She gently set the flashlight down.

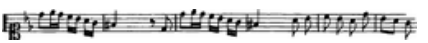
Less gently, she pushed Alisha into the water.

Alisha shrieked, but splash!, she had to hold her breath. When she surfaced, Tim and Anka were already swimming beside her, laughing.

Anka quickly swam to the edge of the basin, where Zelima waited with several distinctly historical towels. But Anka hurried here too. After roughly drying off, Alisha got onto the large altar table and...

Boom!
...after a felt somersault, Alisha was back in Peridëis. Dry! Still, she remembered to step off the altar immediately this time and only wondered afterward. Not a moment too soon, as Tim followed right after, then Anka and Zelima.
As Tim climbed off the altar table, Alisha saw his penis pointing steeply upward. Despite the vigorous movements, it barely swayed, so stiff was it. Barely on the ground, Tim doubled over, and Alisha saw he was on the verge of orgasm. Alisha, who had managed to temper her similar state, now threw herself at Tim. An intense, irrepressible desire surged through her body. She dropped to her knees before Tim, wrapped her hands around his firm bottom, and drew his splendid penis into her mouth. She had just managed to enclose it with her lips in time to catch and absorb his spurting seed. Alisha rubbed her slick, wet vulva against Tim's leg and was fortunate to come with beautiful surges while Tim's seed pulsed into her. Carefully, Alisha sucked Tim's penis clean until no more seed could be tasted or felt. Then she released it with a farewell kiss. This ejaculation doesn't count, Alisha whispered, delighted that Tim nodded.
Beside them, Anka and Zelima lay on the floor, making love. Anka was on top of Zelima, suckling her right breast while rubbing herself against Zelima's privates. It was beautiful to see them come too, Zelima with loud cries, both arching and embracing tightly. During her orgasm, Anka didn't let go of Zelima's breast, moaning through her nose. Only a full moment later did her mouth release the breast, and she lay heavily breathing with her head on Zelima's chest, letting the waves subside while her fingers still gently played with Zelima's breasts. Though unfamiliar to Alisha, it was a beautiful and very pleasant sight.
Once they had all collected themselves, laughter filled the room.
No one's ever watched us before! Anka exclaimed. She gave Zelima's breast a deep, suckling kiss. Milk clearly flowed. But then Anka changed the subject (still rubbing her vulva against Zelima's knee):
What did you notice?
Alisha was genuinely clueless. But what? That the drawings were beautiful?
Heavens, are you slow on the uptake, Anka interjected. The hieroglyphs?
Alisha still didn't get it.
Anka helped a bit: Why didn't we talk to each other there?
???
Alright, Anka said. Those are sealed underground passages in the mundane world —and eventually, you'd breathe up all the air, which would be life-threatening. But tell me, what language did I speak?
English, Alisha said. And not bad at all.
And here? Anka pressed relentlessly.
Alisha looked a bit sheepish, prompting everyone to burst into laughter.
All the same language, Alisha puzzled. Zelima too. Does she only speak Arabic?

Anka nodded. Then she followed up: I speak English, Zelima Arabic. And the hieroglyphs?
I can somehow read them. Why do I understand them? Alisha's mind wasn't quite catching up. Maybe because of the past three days in a daze. Tell me, she asked Anka, embarrassed. Does Peridëis do that?
Yes!, Anka exclaimed proudly. You got it! Isn't that amazing? Simple but inexplicable—everyone understands everyone in Peridëis, and there's hardly a script you can't read. Could you read the hieroglyphs out there in the passage?
No! Alisha cried excitedly. I couldn't read the hieroglyphs in the passage! She slapped her forehead. Finally, I get it...
Do you know what that means for an Egyptologist? Anka asked seriously.
Alisha could well imagine. Turning to Tim, she asked: Do you have any idea why it works?
No, he said curtly. You could tell it bothered him.
See, there are fairy tales after all, Alisha teased.
Why? Tim protested. Suppose a giant computer simulating a virtual world connects all the intelligences of everyone here and everyone who's ever been here, and...
Alisha rolled her eyes. The guy's standing in the middle of paradise and not only denies paradise but his own existence too. You have to let that sink in. I think, therefore I am. Done. What I am doesn't matter; in the end, atoms are just electric charges, in other words: nothing. Conclusion: Paradise is real.
Anka laughed: I see it like you: Peridëis is... Arabian Nights, the lost paradise, Atlantis, all rolled into one.
And now let's go back to the table and keep eating. I have an important appointment later. She gave Zelima's breast another deep, suckling kiss, clearly drawing milk. Then she rose from Zelima. She winked at Alisha and Tim but, a moment later, standing on the floor, suddenly seemed very majestic and powerful. When Alisha went to pick up her dress, Anka said: Leave that rag, you'll get a new dress from me. She said it, left her own dress (and Zelima!) carelessly on the floor, and led the way to resume the interrupted breakfast. So it was only Zelima and Tim who put their clothes back on, though Zelima's whisper of a covering could hardly be called clothing. More like jewelry. Anka and Alisha, however, remained completely naked.



The Fight for Anka

Anka, Alisha, both naked, and Tim, but he in his bailiff uniform, sat chatting and eating together, looking out the window opening at the dreamlike valley with the

beautiful lake. The fresh milk for the coffee came from Alisha this time. Anka had insisted she let the slave Zelima milk her, who proved a master of sensitivity, coaxing the last drop of milk from the deepest corners of her breasts. Zelima had milked half a cup, and Alisha was incredibly proud, especially since it turned out (Zelima demonstrated for Alisha) that about twenty minutes later, there was already a remarkable amount of milk in her breast again. Anka told her that Zelima sometimes made a game of this for hours—while they chatted and lazed about, the slave would casually massage her breasts, pause, play with them more, milk out whatever milk was there, pause, and massage again, as long as they felt like it. And a little milk, Anka said, was always there again after a short break.
Is that right? Anka asked her slave Zelima, who was standing behind Alisha.
Zelima reached under Alisha's arms, grabbed her right breast, applied a thumb-forefinger grip deep into Alisha's right breast, pulled toward the nipple, and whoosh... Anka got a jet of Alisha's breastmilk in her face.
I'll get you...
Zelima ran off, squealing and laughing.
But Anka caught her, and smack! came a swat on the bottom. Followed by a kiss on the lips.
Why the rush when we were out in the mundane world? Alisha asked.
You can enjoy endlessly here in Peridëis, Anka said, but out there, our lifespan is limited, and Peridëis doesn't give you wrinkles, but the mundane world does. She giggled. Plus, we used up air and the flashlight battery. Those don't replenish, and we can chat better here.
The flashlight is waiting for you there? Alisha asked.
Yes. But I can't bring batteries from Peridëis; you can't bring anything. So I'd have to reopen the transition from the mundane world, and that's out of the question. The access further out is still buried. We even erased all traces in the open.
But the flashlight itself stays in the transition room. Like all the stuff from earlier visitors you find there. That's where visitors dumped all their junk, intending to take it back later. Like clothing. And since much of it was forgotten afterward, it created a real treasure trove of all sorts of things from different eras. A true goldmine for me!
But what do you do with the stuff?
Nothing! I just looked at it, took note, went back to Peridëis, and recorded it there. It gave me insight, it was interesting, nothing more. You know, what we usually find from the pharaonic era are grave goods. So we know a lot about their death cult. But mundane things from daily life are far less known, and here I found the most amazing evidence of those. In a beautiful setting, in the transition room, always with fresh air and wonderful lighting. But that's more nostalgia for me now; this transition doesn't bring me anything new anymore. When I fetched Zelima, I went out through another transition. Also when I went with a bailiff to

erase all traces at the tomb from the outside. Our off-road vehicle was still there, the tent, and so on. We carefully erased all traces and shoveled everything back. No one should be able to find the spot. My little brother is the only one who has even half a clue what happened. But he'll keep quiet, and even he probably couldn't find the tomb again. He even knew about my little games with Zelima and never betrayed me. There was never a real secret between us. As a big sister, I'd defend him like a fury if needed, and he, in turn, trusted me boundlessly and always asked me the important questions first. As a teenager, he even once brought home a Western porn magazine he'd gotten somewhere. The three of us looked at it with red faces and theoretically discussed every detail. Unfortunately, I can't let him in on the secret of Peridëis; the Peris drilled that into me firmly. But he's doing fine in the mundane world, so I don't have to feel guilty. Speaking of the mundane world, do you want to know anything else about the things you saw there? Come on, ask me, I'm still proud of my find!

Alisha had an immediate question: How do you know from those drawings that they're actually adult men drinking milk from the woman's breast? If the man is drawn smaller than the woman, couldn't the image at least depict a larger child still being breastfed?

No, Anka answered. There are very strict iconographic rules for such drawings. A child, for example, is marked with a child's lock of hair. That's missing in all the images you saw, and in such a case, it's clearly an adult man. The woman being depicted larger makes her iconographically the higher-ranking person. The difference between slaves and masters, for example, is also shown this way. If an adult pharaoh drinks from a goddess's breast, he's drawn smaller than the goddess, just like the men in our images. Back then, I first thought it might be an unknown goddess or several, because many depictions are known where a goddess offers her breast to a pharaoh to drink. But in our images, there's no indication that the women are goddesses; they seem to be ordinary women, albeit higher-ranking. The men, by the way, also lack any insignia of special status. Just... as you probably know, women in Peridëis are by definition higher-ranking than men, but I didn't know that back then.

About half an hour passed like this. Then Anka called Zelima over: You know I have duties today.

Yes, mistress, Zelima replied, performing a deep curtsy. One *with* a bow. She stepped away and returned with a kind of chair that had a high backrest but was notably long at the rear and had two seats—one higher at the back and one lower at the front. The chair's secret soon became clear. After Zelima positioned the chair at the table, she first sat in the back seat with legs spread, and then Anka sat in it so that Zelima was slightly elevated behind her, while Anka leaned comfortably back against her slave Zelima. Zelima began massaging Anka's breasts but didn't express any milk. Anka closed her eyes, purring at first, but

after a few moments, continued chatting while Zelima did the work. There was much to tell, as Alisha took the opportunity to pepper her with questions about Peridëis, its beauty, and its adventures.

Two or three hours might have passed when Alisha suddenly noticed movement on the lake. At the same time, a rhythmic boom-boom sounded. And again, boom-boom.
What's that? Alisha asked loudly.
Anka answered: They're coming. That's a visit for me. They come every two weeks, announcing themselves with drums. They're residents of this area who have their temple here, and I'm their high priestess. The villages compete beforehand to decide who gets to come. And the two best fighters have a final fight here in the temple. Before that, both have the great privilege of strengthening themselves with my own milk directly from my own breasts. So even the loser of the final fight gains a great prize for himself.
Is that a belief or actually true? Alisha asked. I can hardly imagine that my own milk... well... could be magical.
Instead of Anka, Tim answered: It's actually true. You notice it directly. When I've drunk *your* milk, I can exist here for much longer than with just the milk of the residents. There's no exact conversion formula, because milk drunk directly from the breast is more potent than dried milk or from a jug. Plus, the effect depends on your mood; very feminine women have more effective milk, and so on. As a man, you notice the difference at the latest when the effect wears off. There's a lot of talk about it, most of which is nonsense, and you can't imagine the stuff some women swallow to supposedly get the best milk of all. Or they go to rituals and so-called breast enchanters who call themselves Mammanen, doing the strangest things to their breasts, which, at best, do nothing.
Some things do work, though! Anka interjected.
Tim groaned in mock suffering, earning a smack on the back of his head from Alisha. Anyway, he continued, skilled massages do work. It's a constant topic among women, and you can't run away fast enough. The Peris are supposed to have even more magical milk, but I don't believe it; their milk probably isn't more or less potent than yours. Otherwise, the Peris' milking slaves would be something extraordinary. But they're not.
While the conversation meandered, the slave Zelima continued massaging Anka's breasts with unwavering devotion. But at some point, Anka said: Enough now, it's time to prepare for the temple ritual. (Zelima's hands dropped.) The two chosen fighters will soon strengthen themselves with my own milk for the final fight. That's what Zelima was preparing my breasts for—it stimulates my milk production. After the strengthening, the two men fight to decide who gets to satisfy me and, as a reward, receives a vial of magical milk powder to bring back

to his village.
No way, Alisha said. You let them pick out the best guy in the whole area, and he has to satisfy you! Alisha was impressed. What do they use your milk for? And do they really do it voluntarily? she added.
They do it voluntarily, you can bet on that. But I'd rather have your guy, Anka laughed. But back to it—the fighter receives the powder, but it's shared, fairly or unfairly, among all the people in his village, including the women. His victory is thus a victory for the whole village. They hope it ensures they never suffer a shortage of breastmilk for as long as possible. It's a direct religious belief. But they'd only consume it in an emergency; normally, they carry it in a little pouch around their neck or mix it with random things to make them better, more effective, safer, or whatever. You probably know by now—the milk of visitors, and thus my milk, is much more potent than that of the residents, but the belief in a supernatural effect is like any belief: no one can prove it, but as we know, faith moves mountains, and two-thirds of healing comes from believing in it. So it often actually helps. If it doesn't work, they blame it on maybe getting a crumb less than someone else, or the milk powder being poorly stored, or, for men, unknowingly losing seed or something like that.
Do you put anything in the dried milk? Alisha asked, having seen at the witch's how milk was processed into powder.
No, why? Anka replied. It's my pure milk, evaporated with heat, not cooked, and finely ground. That's it. Normally, I also fill the vial with the burning gas that powers our torches to drive out the air, but you can use some brandy too—there are a thousand recipes, just like for drying, and every woman has her own little secrets for preparing and storing her milk.
Alright, now I'm going to get ready for the temple ritual, Anka concluded. And you, Alisha, will get the promised new dress! Anka rose from her double chair, and Zelima scurried off behind her.
Why only two fighters in the final selection? Alisha asked as she stood up. Normally, there are those magical numbers, three, seven, twelve, or something.
Dead simple, Anka replied. Do I have three breasts?
Tim laughed. Alisha blushed.
Oh, don't worry about it, Anka consoled her. The simplest solutions aren't always obvious at first. Come on, I really need to get ready. To the wardrobe! Anka led the way.

You have the nicer ass, Tim whispered to Alisha as Anka walked ahead of them. She's slimmer, but thin women just lack the capacity for a proper backside.
Thanks. But where'd she get those big tits? Alisha whispered back, crudely.
Milk breasts get their size from milk glands, not fat tissue like dormant breasts, Tim whispered back.

Luckily, Anka hadn't heard.
But Alisha herself thought she had the nicer backside, if only her calves... oh well. It was nice to hear it from Tim. As for the breasts, that would sort itself out —she had a fair shot here, unlike in the mundane world. So no reason for envy or resentment.

The slave Zelima was already waiting at an open door. What Anka had called a wardrobe turned out to be a bright, spacious room that even contained a well-equipped sewing area. The room held exclusively women's clothing in the pharaonic style, as far as Alisha could tell. Pick whatever you want! Anka said generously, casually taking a dress herself and handing it to Zelima. Take your time, she added, I'll have Zelima get me ready in the next room. Come over when you've found something. If it doesn't fit, Zelima can alter it for you.
And with that, Anka disappeared through the door, Zelima following with the dress, leaving Alisha alone with Tim in the light-flooded wardrobe, which had numerous large, latticed wooden windows offering a good view of the temple square with the throne and wooden pole. From outside, the boom-boom could be heard gradually approaching. But there seemed to be time still. Alisha looked around curiously. The dresses were predominantly white, and like the dresses in the tavern, all were cut to leave the breasts exposed. But something bothered Alisha. Was it the cuts? The ornaments? The fabric? She moved from dress to dress, unable to find the right one. She tried on a few but was never satisfied.
Not your thing? Tim asked quietly, leaning against the wall, watching her.
I don't know...
You don't have to take anything from here, Tim said. If you like your own dress better, take your own dress and be done with it.
Alisha hesitated.
No one's forcing you. (Tim's voice grew firmer.) Take your dress! I can see it; you won't be happy with these.
Alisha was relieved by Tim's support: I can't quite say what it is. I was so proud when I first put on my dress. It meant so much to me, you know? And the second one from the town is made the same way. That's important to me.
Tim understood perfectly what Alisha meant.
You know, Alisha continued, these dresses here leave the breasts free, yes, but they don't celebrate them, they just leave them out somehow. But my dress frames the breasts and makes them something special, a kind of jewelry in itself. That's what I want.
She turned to Tim.
He stepped away from the wall. That's what you've got me for, he said. I'll go ahead and tell Anka. I think you don't need to worry; she'll understand.

Tim led the way, and Alisha followed—still completely naked. From the doorway of the next room, he announced loudly and without preamble: All dresses rejected!
Oh, how embarrassing! But to Alisha's great relief, Anka's loud laughter rang out. Tim had apparently struck the right tone. Men!
As Alisha entered the next room, just as brightly lit as the wardrobe, she saw Anka being elaborately made up by Zelima, her entire body adorned with splendid ornaments. She wore a headband in her hair, and delicate gold rings were slipped over her arms and legs.
Anka commented: No worries about your dress, your own things are your own, so stick with your dress. Zelima will fetch it and see what needs fixing.
And when Anka heard movement behind her, she added sharply: Zelima, I said you'll fetch the dress and fix it! You can watch the men satisfy me plenty of times later.
Zelima showed her obedience by dropping to the floor and kissing Anka's feet. But she rose only hesitantly, her eyes wet.
Is she jealous? Tim asked.
Yes, Anka said curtly. But she knows perfectly well that I need a man for satisfaction now and then, and still, I only love her. She's always known that. She knew it when we hit puberty. And yet, every time, she secretly watches from the window as I get satisfied, instead of listening to me and just looking away. She doesn't get that I can't help it, even though she has me all to herself the rest of the time.
Anka pulled Zelima up to her: Who's never let you down? Who pulled you out of the dirt? Who brought you to paradise? Who lives with you day after day, except for two hours every dozen days? Who loves a girl with all the tenderness of mind and heart, when only the chalice cries out for a rough pestle?
Anka stood and gave Zelima a gentle kiss on the forehead. What I can give you, she said, I give you. Everything! But what follows for the next two hours is an abyss. My abyss. Now go get the dress.
The slave Zelima made an obedient curtsy and left the room with her head bowed.
Anka turned to Alisha and Tim: Sorry. I wait for this moment with inner frenzy. This is my compromise. The necessary minimum. And right now, it's consuming me. Look for yourselves...
With a nod, Anka directed their gazes to her lap, and her panting breath alone would have sufficed, underscored only by the sight of her lap: Anka was practically dripping.
Then the slave Zelima returned with Alisha's slightly tattered dress, its skirt slit wide in the middle and its top leaving the breasts exposed. Anka glanced at it and commented: Alisha, you simply have different taste than me; let Zelima work on it, and it'll hold up for a while.

And to Zelima: But first, finish getting me ready!
Zelima fetched something that looked like a bundle of gold cords with countless delicate gold rings attached. It was an intricate laced corset that revealed more than it hid, naturally leaving the breasts free. Above all, the numerous golden cords deliberately framed the ornaments painted on Anka's body and, of course, her breasts. Splendid nakedness would have been the most fitting description.
After Zelima fitted Anka with this intricate piece, she tied a white-and-gold skirt around her, slit in the front. As Zelima knelt before Anka to adjust the skirt, her nose suddenly shot into Anka's lap, taking a deep, very deep breath. But in the same moment, Anka grabbed her and delivered three flat-handed slaps to her bottom. Then she seized Zelima's hair and hissed: You're only making it harder for yourself!
Her eyes sparkled. Yet there was no anger in them, rather a certain satisfaction. Even the slave Zelima, discreetly rubbing her bottom, didn't seem to find the incident such a bad trade. At least, the look of jealousy had vanished from her face, and she was busily ensuring the high priestess was in top form for her ritual.
Anka turned to Tim and Alisha once more: I have a request... a real wish... I don't often have visitors like you... I'd really love it if you'd watch, here at the window. You have a good view from here, and since you're in the shadows, no one can see you behind the lattice, not even me. Will you watch? The whole time, yes? I'd really appreciate it.
Gladly, Tim said.
And, she added hesitantly, ...the men do it voluntarily, please remember that. Okay?
The high priestess Anka now had a truly pleading look.
Of course! Tim said.
Naturally! Alisha said.
You know, Anka added quietly, it just happens. It came unbidden, was just there, and happens. I just receive it like a gift. Like a dream you simply dream, that's just there. The men's fights in this area are bloody even without me. But never unfair and never beyond a certain point. There were even men who came back multiple times, she added, even if they lost a fight once. That's exactly my thing...
Anka, we believe you! Tim said again. It's new for Alisha, but I know Peridëis a bit by now, and if need be, I can explain to Alisha what's necessary. I have a good idea of what's about to happen. Let it happen! For my part, I'd love to watch.
Thank you, Anka said softly. Her breath came in gasps, and her gaze was glassy.
Done, said the slave Zelima.
The high priestess Anka smiled, gave her slave another kiss on the forehead, and left the room.
Moments later, Alisha and Tim watched through the latticed window as Anka stepped onto the plateau with dignified, slow strides. In her left hand, she carried

an elaborately decorated, bluish-shimmering vial, its lid tightly sealed with numerous intricately woven cords. In her right hand, she held a crystal goblet that seemed to be filled with water.
What's she carrying? Alisha asked.
The vial contains her milk, ground into powder, answered the slave Zelima, standing right behind Alisha. The goblet in her right hand is carved from a large crystal and holds plain water. It symbolizes that milk comes from simple water and gains its special power only through the mystery and strength of the female body.
Thank you, said Alisha.
Thank you, said Tim, without turning around. But Zelima, I think you should really listen to Anka. It does you no good to watch this for the thousandth time and torment yourself. But if you fix up Alisha's dress, you'll make her very happy.
Thank you for giving me a good reason to look away, Zelima said quietly behind them. Honestly.
Zelima slipped away behind their backs.
Meanwhile, the high priestess Anka walked slowly toward the stone throne. The throne stood prominently elevated at the back of the plateau, right in its center. A staircase of perhaps ten or twelve steps led down from the throne to a kind of altar table, square in shape and covered with a very thick black-and-gold embroidered cloth. From this altar table, more steps led down to the plateau. The high priestess Anka positioned herself before the steps to the altar table, holding the vial in her left hand and the crystal goblet in her right hand out in front of her, and performed a deep curtsy (no bow!). She ascended the steps to the altar table, crossed it, climbed the further steps to the throne, and finally sat upon it. Before sitting, she raised the vial and crystal goblet high, then placed them in recesses in the armrests, which seemed designed for this purpose. Only then did she sit on the throne. She sat very upright. Then, with dignity, she parted the two halves of her skirt and spread her legs wide, presenting her widely opened, aroused vulva to the temple visitors. She remained motionless in this pose.
Alisha and Tim had watched breathlessly from their window, forgetting to glance down at the lake. There, about twenty long rowboats had docked, ten on each side of the wide staircase leading up to the plateau. The boats on the left were predominantly blue, those on the right red. Women and men could be seen, seemingly mingling freely as they left the boats. In total, there were about a hundred people gathering at the foot of the stairs. Now it was clear they were organizing themselves. At the front, a single man from each group, with the others following at a distance of a few meters. These lone men appeared to be the fighters set to compete. The drums started again, both groups in the same rhythm: a rhythmic boom-boom, first a boom from the left side, then one from the right.

And again, boom-boom. At the same time, the people began ascending the steps to the plateau in two elongated rows, everyone in single file, moving in sync with the drums, as if to symbolize that they were separate but followed the same rules. The drums themselves brought up the rear of the two human chains, the left one clad in blue, the right in red.
Boom-boom. Step and step.
Boom-boom. Step and step.
Boom-boom. Step and step.
A glance at the high priestess Anka.
It was clear she was breathing rapidly. Her face was pale. Her gaze was fixed. The high priestess's right hand reached for the crystal goblet, brought it to her lips, and moistened them. Then she set the goblet back in place. Her hand trembled noticeably.
Now the fighters had reached the plateau first and positioned themselves facing their high priestess in the center of the open space between the throne and the pole. Then the others followed, one by one.
Boom-boom. Step and step. Boom-boom. Step and step.
Finally, everyone formed a semicircle around the throne, the two drums in the center, blue colors dominating to the left of the throne, red to the right, with the pole separating the two groups. There were roughly equal numbers of women and men, mingling without separating by gender. The semicircle wasn't strictly precise, and the crowd stood in one, two, or three rows without apparent order.
The two fighters had taken their places in the center. Both wore only a kind of kilt that barely covered the buttocks and sides, leaving the penis exposed and closing above the pubis like a belt. The kilt of one fighter was red, the other's blue, both edged with ornate borders. The border curved gently upward at the front, leaving a clear space for the penis. Perhaps the kilt's cut symbolized the fighters' bid to enter their high priestess's vagina. But the kilt's primary purpose seemed to be carrying the weapons for the fight. Each fighter held vertically in his right hand something that at first looked like a lance. But they were actually long whips, with shafts nearly three meters long and a whipcord at the end, perhaps a meter in length. At their belts, the fighters carried a meter-long stiff switch with a short cord at the end, maybe ten or fifteen centimeters long, as well as a short flogger with numerous cords at the handle's end, each about twenty centimeters long, and a coiled piece of rope.
The high priestess Anka rose from the throne, holding the vial of her dried milk aloft in her left hand and the crystal goblet of clear water in her right.
All roughly one hundred people returned the greeting. The women performed a curtsy, the men bowed their heads, a gesture that might have lasted half a minute but felt like an eternity to Alisha and Tim.
But now the greeting was over, and the high priestess set the milk vial back down.

She brought the crystal goblet to her lips and drank from it, sip by sip, until it was half empty. Then she placed the crystal goblet back in its spot.
When that was done, she began to slowly descend from her throne to the altar table.
The two fighters, meanwhile, ascended the steps to the altar table, the blue one on the left, the red on the right.
The drums sounded again in time with the steps: Boom-boom. Step and step.
Finally, the high priestess and the fighters stood face to face.
Boom!
And the drums fell silent.
The fighters laid their long whips on the ground and knelt before the high priestess.
Anka took a step toward them. With her left hand, she lifted her left breast and with her right hand her right breast. She offered her left breast to the blue-clad fighter and her right to the red-clad one. Both took the nipples in their lips and began drinking the magical milk of the high priestess.
Silence reigned over the temple square.
Moments later, in the prevailing absolute silence, a sigh from the high priestess could be heard, an involuntary movement of the two fighters toward Anka was noticeable, and it was clear that the fighters seemed to be falling into a kind of trance. The sucking movements of their jaws became noticeably slower but more forceful in the same moment. Anka, meanwhile, had closed her eyes as if in meditation, as though drawing energy from the air to let it flow out through her breasts as milk.
Total silence still prevailed on the temple square.
Minutes passed.
Like the Peridëis symbol, Alisha whispered, hidden in the shadows behind her latticed window.
They're strengthening themselves for their task—and so even the loser of the fight gains something, Tim whispered back, but I think Anka is only mimicking the Peridëis symbol.
You think so?
How else? She's just a visitor like us.
True. But I wouldn't have drunk so much water. What if she suddenly needs to pee in the middle of it?
What you think of! Tim chuckled. But even if the water she drank isn't sucked out as milk, if she just started peeing, it'd probably be a cult thing for the people.
Why's that now?
If the queen has a mole on her face, the court ladies stick fake moles on their faces, and if the state council chairman has a Saxon accent, the loyal comrades

adopt it too[60]. And if Anka brazenly peed on the fighters, you can imagine what the women would do at home during sex later.
Now it was Alisha who chuckled. But she composed herself, and the atmosphere outside captivated her anew.
Perhaps ten minutes had passed.
Breathless silence had reigned over the square. The only sounds came from the high priestess herself and occasionally from the two fighters. Never from the crowd.
Then the high priestess pulled her breasts away from the fighters with her hands. She turned and ascended back to her throne. At the top, she took her seat again. Sitting upright, but with her thighs wide open.
The two fighters picked up their long whips from the ground, stood, and walked to the staircase leading down from the altar to the temple square. Both had steeply erect penises and made no effort to hide it.
The drums started again: Boom-boom. Step and step.
Moments later, the fighters had reached the bottom.
The drums fell silent.
Both fighters took their positions on either side of the pole, the blue one on the left, the red on the right. They faced each other and lowered their whips. The other people still stood in a semicircle around the pole, leaving the half-circle open toward the high priestess and the altar.
The high priestess clapped her hands.
The fighters leaned forward and lowered their long whips.
Complete silence reigned again. Alisha breathed audibly. Suddenly, she said quietly: Look! Both men's penises have gone completely soft. They were totally erect just a moment ago!
Doesn't surprise me, Tim replied softly. Distraction works the strongest. I think most normal erection problems come from men holding onto thoughts that have nothing to do with sex.
Both fell silent again and watched intently outside.
The two fighters began circling the pole warily, eyeing each other.
There! The blue fighter swung, and the whip hissed audibly through the air, followed by a loud crack, almost like a pistol shot.
But he had no chance of hitting, as the red fighter was on the opposite side of the pole, using it skillfully as cover. Yet he responded with his whip in the same way. A loud crack rang out, again almost like a pistol shot.
But the blue fighter had attempted a second strike in the meantime. Crack!
The red fighter nimbly slipped under the whip and countered with a very low whip strike. Again, it hissed and cracked deafeningly.

60 An allusion to former GDR leader Walter Ulbricht. It was indeed so.

His opponent dodged with a leap and struck from above.
The red fighter evaded with a sideways move.
Now the fighters watched each other, circling the pole, never taking their eyes off their opponent.
They don't show any pain at all, Alisha whispered. Those strikes must hurt terribly!
You think they actually hit each other? Tim asked.
Of course! Alisha replied. Didn't you hear the awfully loud cracks?
That doesn't mean they hit, Tim said. The whipcord can reach supersonic speed at the tip with skilled handling, physicists have calculated, and that causes the crack. I think with the long whips, it's not just about striking but also about intimidating the opponent and impressing the spectators.
The two fighters circled each other at a safe distance, always keeping the pole between them. The blue one threatened with a mighty strike into the air. Crack! The red fighter responded no less forcefully. Crack!
Again!
Again!
But now the fighters drew closer. Crack! Crack! Crack!
Hit! The blue fighter flinched, a brief, suppressed groan was heard after the whip strike, and a red welt appeared across his stomach and back.
Alisha groaned and flinched along with him but watched the scene, transfixed.
The struck fighter, in a rage of pain, unleashed a flurry of strikes. Crack! Crack! Crack!
The red opponent countered in the same manner.
There! Crack! Hit!
Another crack! Hit!
Both fighters now took blows, another strike, then another. Welts marked their legs, stomachs, and backs.
There, another strike. Crack! A cry.
Suddenly, the fight was halted. The blue fighter clutched his face, apparently struck there. But what was this? The red fighter dropped his whip to the ground and sank to his knees, as if begging for forgiveness. A blue-clad woman hurried over and dabbed at her injured fighter's face.
Now the red fighter rose from his knees but left his whip carelessly on the ground and stood upright.
What could this mean? Was the fight over?
No, apparently not. The injured blue fighter took position to the side of the pole, perhaps three or four meters from the other fighter, whip in his right hand. He swung slowly, aiming very carefully...
The red fighter stood rigid and motionless before him.
No, he wouldn't... Alisha whispered.

Looks like it, Tim replied. There seem to be strict rules about forbidden body areas. I was already wondering why the penis is so unprotected—what good is a victor to Anka if his penis or testicles are in pain? He glanced up at Anka. She indeed seemed displeased; her thighs were closed for the moment, and her face looked angry.
Then the red fighter, awaiting punishment, spoke: I request my punishment, he said.
He stood rigid. Pale in the face, his fear visible. But he didn't move a millimeter.
Hiss—Crack!
The red fighter fell to his knees, clutching his face. The blue-clad woman was at his side in an instant, tending to his face. A woman from the opposing side!
But little time passed before the fighters took their positions again. The red fighter had his whip in hand once more and was in fighting stance. The blue fighter struck first. Then it continued, strike after strike.
The high priestess Anka sat on her throne again, thighs open. Tim watched her, fascinated, as Anka was clearly highly aroused by the sight of the fight, her breath rapid, her gaze fixed, her upper body tensely leaning forward.
There! The red fighter managed to catch his opponent's whipcord. Not without cost, as a welt appeared on his left forearm. He immediately used his advantage to land a direct hit on his opponent's back. The end of his whip wrapped around the blue fighter's back, under the armpits, and across to the chest, where a red stripe now showed.
The blue fighter doubled over in pain, groaning, but he managed to grab his opponent's whip with his arm and hand.
Both fighters quickly wrapped the cord of the opponent's whip around their own wrists. This left neither with a chance to use their whip again.
How would it continue? Would it stay a stalemate? Would one wrench the whip from the other to keep fighting?
No! Neither wasted time on such attempts. Instead, each broke the opponent's weapon into several pieces and threw them to the ground. Finally, the now-useless whipcords fell.
But now, each fighter drew the switch from his belt and let it hiss threateningly through the air. Both visibly took care to keep the pole between themselves and their opponent. The switches were far quieter than the whips, but their hissing made it clear you'd better stay out of their reach. Another thing was different now: the switches had a loop at the handle, making it harder to snatch them from the opponent's hand.
The fighters circled again. Time and again, they let their switches hiss menacingly through the air. Sweat ran down the men's bodies, surely adding pain as it seeped into the many welts.
Hiss, hit! The blue fighter leaped past the pole, gained momentum with a kick

against it, flew past the red fighter, landed a blow on his thigh, while his leap caused the opponent's strike to miss. Barely landing, he delivered a second skillful blow to the other leg's thigh. The red fighter collapsed, not by choice but from one of those involuntary reactions no willpower can resist. The blue fighter seemed to have counted on this—blow after blow rained down on the red fighter before he could recover.

There! The red fighter now lay on his side. In an instant, his opponent was on him, yanking the rope from his belt, tying the red fighter's hands with it, pulling the rope's end through the pole's ring, and knotting it there.

The victor raised both hands in a triumphant pose. Roaring applause and cheers came from his blue-clad supporters, while the red-clad losers offered simple clapping (at least!).

The high priestess on her throne clapped graciously as well. After a few minutes, she made a gesture with both hands, clearly signaling the people to leave the temple.

The people, red and blue alike, bowed deeply to their high priestess. The blue fighter returned to the pole and untied the defeated red fighter. Both bowed to each other, and then the red-clad people took their fighter in, consoling him and leading him away.

The red and blue-clad people descended the steps from the temple to the lake, in no particular order. And this time, the drums were silent.

The temple square was empty. Only Anka, the high priestess, sat on her throne, and below, between the pole and the altar table, stood the victor with his head bowed. Alisha and Tim watched breathlessly from their hiding spot, just as Anka had wanted.

Now the high priestess Anka clapped her hands loudly. The blue fighter, left alone on the temple square, raised his head and looked up at Anka. The high priestess Anka, sitting with legs spread wide, presented her wide-open vulva to him. He must have had a direct view straight into it. Only Alisha and Tim, in their hiding spot, unfortunately couldn't see it. As aroused as Anka appeared, her sex must have offered the fighter an unmistakably inviting sight: heavily swollen, perhaps even slightly parted, certainly soaking wet, and surely exuding an intoxicating scent.

For a long while, silence prevailed again.

The victor's penis began to rise until it stood steeply upright.

The high priestess took the crystal goblet filled with clear water again. She brought it to her lips once more and this time drank it completely empty, sip by sip. Then she set the crystal goblet back to her right.

Having done this, she took the elaborately decorated, bluish-shimmering vial, its lid tightly sealed with numerous intricately woven cords, in both hands. She stood and, with the vial in her hands, descended the steps of her altar slowly and with

dignity.
A soft noise was heard behind Alisha and Tim.
Tim turned around. Zelima, don't do it, he said quietly.
But it torments me, Zelima whispered, having crept back.
That's even more reason not to, Tim replied. Haven't your thoughts ever drifted away from Anka while you were pleasuring yourself? And you still love Anka more than anything?
Yes, that happens, Zelima whispered very, very softly.
This is no different, Tim said. Peridëis is a dream, and dreams are free. If your spirit isn't free, you aren't free, and things are bad for you. Then someone else has control over you, but you lack the balance you need for your own health. Like how art is a balance in the real world. The world's in trouble when art isn't free. Is it easier to see it that way?
No.
For heaven's sake! Tim grumbled in a hushed voice, careful not to let the argument be heard outside. Would it be easier if I promised you a spanking?!
Yes.
Tim was genuinely taken aback.
Hey! he said. Give me a way out, and I'll reward you.
Yes. For the first time, a smile appeared on Zelima's face. A mischievous one. I'm already gone, she promised, and—poof—she was indeed gone again.
Is she provoking Anka with her defiance? Tim asked, turning to Alisha.
I think so, Alisha replied. It's not that illogical.
Hm, said Tim.
Hm, said Alisha. Look outside, or you'll miss the best part.
The high priestess Anka was already standing on the square, altar-like table covered with a thick black-and-gold embroidered cloth. The elaborately decorated, bluish-shimmering vial, its lid sealed with numerous intricately woven cords, now stood behind her on the steps leading up to the throne.
The victor was slowly ascending the steps from the temple square to the altar table, where the high priestess awaited him. Directly before her, atop the altar table with the thick black-and-gold embroidered cloth, he stopped. He lowered his head again.
The high priestess Anka stepped toward the victor. She reached under both her breasts again. But what was she doing? Behold—she sprayed milk from her own breasts onto the fighter's wounds and carefully spread it with her fingers. Her hands glided over the fighter's skin, moistening it, and time and again, her hands drew fresh milk from her breasts, which she gently spread on the fighter's skin. Anka's hands didn't neglect the blue-clad fighter's face, nor his ears or neck; even his steeply erect phallus received its share, and finally, the high priestess knelt to tend to his upper and lower thighs and even his feet. And repeatedly, she

milked her breasts, providing ample milk in broad streams as a healing miracle salve for his skin.
To the astonishment of the secretly watching Alisha, the whip wounds visibly closed. Not even red welts remained, nothing!
How does that work?! Is Anka's breastmilk actually magical? Alisha quietly asked Tim.
No more magical than Anka said, Tim replied. Your milk is no less healing, just far more effective than that of Peridëis's residents. The loser is tended to in the same way, but with the milk of an ordinary woman. In a few hours, there'll be nothing left to see on him either.
Is it always like this in Peridëis? Alisha asked.
Always. Even without milk, just slower. No death. No serious injuries, no infections. Don't forget where you are.
I definitely won't forget, seeing that out there, Alisha said. Anka's about to get taken by a man I'd only ever see in a photo or on TV, and my own lap is protesting fiercely against its own neglect!
Then pleasure yourself!
...
Would it help if I went to another room? Tim asked.
No, Alisha answered. I want you here. I can handle it. But it's really arousing me. Even the fight had a strange effect. Maybe because of the reward awaiting the victor, but also just... strange... two men fighting bloodily for a woman... there's something archaic in it that I can't resist.
Silence.
Both looked outside again.
The high priestess Anka was still kneeling before the blue-clad fighter, who had closed his eyes and let happen what was happening to him. Anka now devoted her full attention to his steeply erect, swollen phallus, which would soon take center stage. Could Anka's breastmilk work special magic here too? At least Anka seemed to hope so, as the fighter's phallus received far more of her magical essence for care than any other body part. And this, despite it having been carefully spared in the preceding fight. Now Anka pulled back the skin protecting the most sensitive part of his phallus and lavishly anointed this secret part with her milk, salving and cleansing it.
The secretly watching Alisha melted. Poor Tim beside her must have been faring even worse. Yet Alisha instinctively clung to his hand.
Now Anka slid the fighter's phallus into her mouth. A loud groan was heard. The fighter must have been on the edge of his self-control, as Anka had taken her time.
Anka's head moved back and forth, her hands gripping the fighter's buttocks. But the movements weren't fast, far from hectic, instead slow, savoring, seemingly

driven entirely by her own desire, heedless of whether the fighter craved more. It went back and forth, sometimes deliberately slow and sucking, sometimes a touch faster, and sometimes she took the fighter's phallus out of her mouth, teasing the corona and the tip with its tiny opening, from which his seed would soon flow, with her tongue. Such games she played with the fighter's phallus. Very slow, very restrained. Very torturous for him, who dared not move.
Woe if you come! Anka threatened the fighter darkly, yet gazing up at him with raging desire.
He nodded with effort.
If you do, you'll go to the pillory for a day until you're fit to be used as a man again with full reward.
The fighter nodded again with effort.
That's what the pole is for! Alisha commented quietly behind the latticed window.
Honestly, I'm a bit relieved, Tim replied just as quietly.
Me too, Alisha said. And now I'm curious if the man can manage it. How would you fare in his place?
I don't know. On one hand, celibacy makes you easily excitable, but on the other, you lack the habit.
How do you know that?!
Do you think I don't have moments when I'm half mad with desire? I used to think I'd come on my own in seconds during those moments, but it's not like that. At least for me, with my hand. It always stayed unsuccessful long enough for me to rein myself in.
Strange. And when women come on to you?
You saw it with the witch. Something happens that I no longer control.
In the truest sense... Alisha chuckled.
Outside on the altar table, covered with a black-and-gold embroidered cloth, Anka stroked the fighter's phallus. And finally, she slowly sank from kneeling to lying on her back. At last, she lay on her back with legs spread, her skirt flung wide open on the altar.
Satisfy me, strong man!
The fighter took a step toward the wide-open high priestess. His phallus stood flawlessly erect in full splendor.
Take me at last! the high priestess screamed. Not in anger. It was urgent desire.
Now the fighter finally let himself fall, grabbed Anka's raised buttocks, and thrust his phallus into her lap with a powerful jolt. Both groaned loudly.
Alisha groaned softly.
The fighter held Anka's buttocks firmly, rhythmically pulling her lap into his, thrust after thrust. There was no restraint now; he reacted like a wild animal with its prey in its grasp. His hips thrust, his hands did their part, Anka cried out loudly

in lust and delight, the fighter panted, his eyes wild, reason no longer in play, faster and faster the movements became, suddenly it was clear that Anka's body tensed, her breath held. She gasped, don't stop, don't stop, don't stop, keep going, yes, yes, yesssssssss, and just a fraction of a moment later, it happened much the same for the fighter, he too convulsed, slowed slightly, deeper, more rhythmic, Anka felt it, pulled his pelvis to her lap to press his phallus deep inside her, and then he groaned too, yesssssssssssssssss.
You could almost feel what was happening deep inside the vagina.
After receiving satisfaction, both lay panting on top of each other. Anka still clung to the fighter's buttocks, pressing them into her pelvis to avoid losing any connection, in case his softening penis might slip out of her vagina.
Some time passed.
Anka quietly asked the fighter: Have you spilled your seed into me?
Yes, mistress, I have spilled my seed into you.
And you held nothing back?
No, mistress, I held back not the tiniest drop and took special care to release it all.
Then take your reward now and bring it home as a trophy.
Thank you, mistress.
The blue fighter gently rose from Anka, placed a careful farewell kiss on her wet vulva, took the elaborately decorated, bluish-shimmering vial, its lid tightly sealed with numerous intricately woven cords, from the steps to the throne, and left his high priestess. Alisha and Tim saw the blue fighter swiftly descend the temple stairs to his boat with the vial in hand, and a little later, how he departed across the lake.

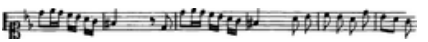
Then Anka called out: Tim! Alisha! Do me the pleasure and come here! Zelima? Coffee!
She remained lying on the altar table, placing her legs up on the steps to the throne, as if wanting to conceive from the received seed.
Are you trying to get pregnant? asked Alisha, approaching. Or why are you elevating your pelvis?
I like having the seed with all its wriggling, lively little sperm deep inside me, Anka laughed. Like an aquarium. Sperm can live for at least four days, did you know that?
I knew that. I can also count to 28 to avoid getting pregnant.
Anka laughed again. But in Peridëis, that's useless knowledge.
Now Alisha laughed.
Anka dipped her finger into her vagina. No, she said, every now and then I really need that animalistic masculinity, and that includes being filled with male seed. Call it nonsense, but that's how it is for me.
Why nonsense? Alisha replied. I can totally understand that part. Besides, nature

has to somehow ensure reproduction.
Then Zelima arrived, placed a tray with coffee, fresh milk, and drinking cups on the altar, but vanished immediately.
Why don't you invite Zelima to stay? Tim asked.
I don't want to overdo it, Anka replied. Everything about me smells of man, and I still feel the man inside me. She'll get her reward tonight, after I've bathed and my satisfaction has settled. Then I'm ready for tenderness and more, and Zelima will have something from me. On such evenings, things can get wild between us.
Aren't you ever wild otherwise? Or is the wildness more in this slave-mistress relationship?
Everything, Anka answered. She had now half-propped herself up and poured coffee for Alisha and Tim, adding fresh milk. Zelima's breastmilk from a jug. Then she added: I'm even pretty sure it's this regular temple ritual that keeps our desire alive. So it benefits not just me but both of us. Still, it's not easy for Zelima, poor thing.
Because she's a slave?
No, not at all. That might be hard for you to understand. Slave... and submissive to me, that's her deepest inner drive. Fulfilling my wishes makes her happy. She can reach climax from whipping. No, I meant me and the fact that I can't keep my hands off men. That's hard for her because she'll never have me all to herself.
For a moment, silence reigned.
Finally, Alisha dared to ask: Do you live out this lesbian side only because of her?
I don't know, Anka said. It's possible that without her, I'd never have had a physical relationship with a woman. On the other hand, we were always together, so that "never" almost seems unthinkable. The desire to dominate has nothing to do with it. Rather, we might have grown close and stayed together because we fit each other this way. Both aspects—finding and staying. You know, I'm in love with Zelima as a person. That she happens to be a woman is secondary. That probably describes it best.
Now I get it, Tim interjected. That's the key I needed to understand your relationship.
And what do you think... about the temple ritual? Anka abruptly changed the subject, her face turning very red.
Both Alisha and Tim realized Anka must have been waiting for this moment the whole time.
Strangely arousing, Tim answered first.
Alisha hesitated. Very bloody, she said cautiously. Not that it wasn't erotic, it wouldn't leave me cold if several men fought over me. But... does it have to be so... bloody?
It puts me in a near-trance state, Anka confessed in a whisper. Exactly like that. Those are my darkest desires, men fighting to the blood just to thrust into my lap

once and spill their seed inside...
I can kind of understand, Alisha added. My parents once took me to a boxing match. It was an event for youths. They explained the boxing rules in detail, and then there was a real match. I think there were even fairly well-known fighters in the ring. After a while, it really gripped me, and I saw women nearby who were completely out of control. It was a strange experience, but I never went to another boxing match afterward. This was similar, only much stronger, because... because they fought for you, for a woman, and... because there was blood and pain involved. I've read about flagellant processions in the Middle Ages, how the atmosphere there could be sexually charged and was deemed lascivious.
Thank you for putting it so nicely, Anka said quietly.
It really is like that, Alisha said. Tell me, did you arrange all this?
No, Anka replied. It happened to me. I came, found the empty temple, the people told me they were looking for a high priestess, explained what was expected, and begged me to take the role, saying I was the only one who could. I assume that referred to qualities that distinguish us Peridëis visitors and witches from them as ordinary residents. They must have sensed it, even if they weren't aware of it.
Like with my milk, Alisha interjected. People notice the effect.
Tim had another thought: But Peridëis seems to have gifted this temple to you, he said. Just you.
Thank you, Anka said. I've often puzzled over what's happening here. You know, I frequently roam my own land, but I rarely visit other parts of Peridëis, so I'm uncertain. Sometimes I feel guilty, but then I see how happy Zelima is with her life and keep getting confirmation that the people are content with me as their high priestess, and that it's their deepest wish to send me men who fight to serve me and receive the honor of my milk. There shouldn't be any doubt, but sometimes it catches me.
Your upbringing? Alisha interjected.
Probably, Anka replied. That's why I have no desire to return to the mundane world. And since the people, beyond the temple service, sometimes need my head, life here even has meaning.
Your head?! Alisha asked, confused.
My mind, Anka answered. You know, the people here... I don't know where they originally came from, but if you ask me, they came here tens of thousands of years ago rather than earlier, and in Peridëis, they seem to have stayed at that level. They're completely free of technical knowledge, can barely count, let alone do math, and they don't think far ahead. You don't always notice it in daily life... Sometimes they need someone with a bit more knowledge and foresight, and I take that on. See, that way, eros, intellect, aesthetics, and helpfulness are all demanded, my quirks find purpose, and everything is perfectly splendid. Am I good or bad now?

Alisha and Tim laughed.
Just live it, Tim said. Don't overthink it so much. It's happening for you, and if you don't accept it, it helps no one and is just foolish, definitely not good for you or Zelima. Peridëis is thoughts spoken aloud and brought to life. And in our language, there's a song called "Die Gedanken sind frei." So let them be free.
Anka lay back down, her legs again propped up on the throne's steps, and smiled. She finally looked relaxed again. And, she asked cheekily, did you enjoy the... fuck?
Tim groaned.
Alisha burst out laughing. Poor guy, he enjoyed it far too much, but he can't let out what your fighter spilled into your lap.
I hadn't thought of that, Anka said, embarrassed.
It's fine, Tim said. In sleep, when I'm not responsible, such things sometimes surface as a balance, occasionally even with relief at the end.
Really?
Yes. Not a real orgasm, more a kind of pleasant, relieving flow. I don't know if anything actually flows, but I dream it that way.
At least something, Alisha sighed, genuinely pitying Tim. And by the way, she added to Anka, I was jealous of you for that guy. And also, turning a simple... fuck... into a grand ritual, with lots of effort and ceremony, elevating it, staging a big prelude—that was really arousing.
Anka smiled.
The dress is ready, Zelima's voice came from behind.
When Alisha put on her dress, she and Tim both felt it was a good time to leave Zelima and the high priestess.
Zelima led them through a rock passage to the other side of the lake, where the azure paved path emerged from the water and led into a valley with steep cliffs rising on either side, a lush green jungle with numerous flowers in the center, and the sun always shining directly down on the azure paved path. Here, too, a stream wound through the valley, drinkable when needed and occasionally offering bathing spots.
Zelima handed Tim a bag with some treats, hugged Alisha goodbye, and suddenly asked with a mischievous glint: May I?
What??? Alisha looked at her, confused.
Zelima grabbed Tim's upper arms with both hands, stretched up to him, and kissed him full on the mouth. I think you're nice, she said afterward. Then she quickly added: Of course, I think you're both nice!
All three laughed, and the slave Zelima turned and headed back to the temple.
Alisha and Tim watched Zelima until she disappeared into the secret passage they'd taken from the temple to the valley. Tim put Zelima's provisions in his backpack, and both looked back once more at the lake and the temple stairs

stretching sideways into the cliffs.
Let’s go, Tim said.
Let’s go, Alisha replied.
Let’s not go, Tim said.
?!
Tim laughed. Even though you can do the witch’s leap, I’d still like some security in case something happens or we get separated. Let’s go to the cliffs and get a new crystal for you to carry.
You too.
Yesssss. Me too.
Both walked along the lake shore until they reached the steep cliff wall bounding the valley. As they followed the cliff, a passage branched off into the rock after just a few dozen meters. They entered and soon found a spot on the wall where the familiar fool’s gold gleamed. Tim chipped out two pieces, not without effort, had Alisha discard her old fool’s gold, and gave her the new crystal. Alisha tucked it into one of her dress pockets, and Tim stowed his piece as well.
The lake shore is striking enough to easily memorize, Tim said as they both looked back across the lake.
And if you land here with a witch’s leap, you’ll have company and a comfy place to stay right away, Alisha added.
True.
Then they really set off. Back to the azure paved path and following it into the valley.



Conversations about Anka

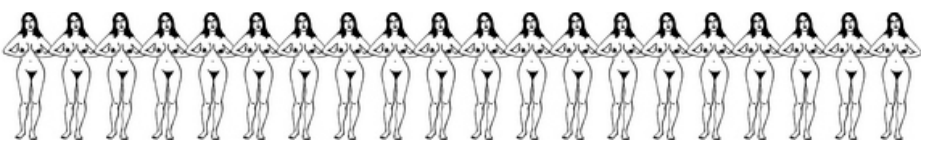
For a while, both walked silently side by side along the azure paved path. Each was lost in their own thoughts.
You know what Anka reminds me of? Tim finally asked. A praying mantis or a black widow.
A what?
Praying mantis or black widow. They eat the male during mating. The interesting question for me is: Does the male suffer or not? It's not entirely clear, and an ethical question is irrelevant for animals. But do the males suffer from being eaten, or is it that, in sexual arousal, they might even take pleasure in being eaten? And only flee when the arousal has faded?
You're thinking less about Anka and more about the men who fought for her?
Yes. Maybe we could've told Anka that.
Better not, Alisha said. Would you want to be compared to a spider?
Brrrr. No. But aside from that, Tim added, it's not entirely clear with the residents whether we can compare them to us anyway.

You really think they're an illusion? Anka clearly doesn't.
Hard to say. From everything I've heard or seen, they're part of Peridëis, so why should they follow different rules than Peridëis as a whole? If my theory is right, they remind me of dream figures... only there because I'm dreaming. Or like a writer's fictional characters: what they do always has something to do with the writer, but they don't exist without them. Peridëis is such a fascinating world. If it was created to purify one's soul, it'd be almost wrong *not* to indulge in things like Anka does. Just like art, literature, or film. Things happen there that we'd find reprehensible in reality. Yet we love reading crime novels.
And risqué stories, Alisha added thoughtfully. We passed those around under the desk in class.
By the way, Tim said, did you notice how fairly the two men fought and how fair the spectators were?
True.
That's typical for Peridëis. The men often fight bloodily, but always remarkably fairly, and the women would deeply resent ambushes or the like—that's shameful. Only genuine, honest victories count.
Are there ever deadly fights?
Never. Have you forgotten that you can't die in Peridëis?
Right. So not in accidents or fights either?
No. Fights end with the opponent submitting, whether through defeat, exhaustion, or pain.
And then?
Depends. It's either over, or there's captivity or enslavement. It just depends.
How does slavery fit with this being paradise?
Because it's different from the mundane world and felt differently. Plus, once a year, there's a big festival celebrating the creation of Peridëis. On that day, at noon, the sun goes out for about a minute, and total darkness reigns. When it lights up again, it's the symbol of Peridëis's creation, and the festival begins[61]. At that moment, every slave is free and has the right to return or not. But the owner can never free a slave against their will. Of course, slave owners make heaps of promises a few weeks before the festival, which they usually don't keep, and generally ensure a good mood among their slaves.
And they fall for it?!
Sure, it works with packaging, politics, and revolutions too.
True. And with big tits.
Because of the milk?
No, because the woman behind the big tits can be dumb and still have better chances.

61 Cf.: Saturnalia in Rome from 45 BCE, celebrated between December 17–23. The god Saturn was honored as ruler of the primordial golden age.

Which is an argument for the prudish faction of humanity.
Alisha laughed. No, you shouldn't judge a woman just by her brains.
That I live to hear this... where was I? Oh right, the slaves. A slave owner can also make things particularly uncomfortable for a slave if they want to get rid of them.
Why would they want that? And why would the slave want to stay?
You're only a slave for a set time, Tim answered. Wage labor doesn't exist in Peridëis. Either you work freely for yourself, or you sell yourself for an agreed period. Once you take on a slave, you have a duty to provide for them. It's also agreed what the slave is guaranteed. If the owner doesn't uphold that, the slave can be taken from their possession, and if necessary, what would've been due to the slave for the remaining time is seized. Kind of like a settlement after a divorce. So becoming a slave isn't always easy, or conversely, it can be attractive because it offers secure living conditions. But the slave gives themselves entirely.
Is that to be taken literally?
Absolutely. A slave is a slave.
That'd mean if I sold myself for a single day, the owner could not only make me work but also rape me.
First, women don't work in Peridëis. At most, aesthetic or artistic things like jewelry or clothing, or maybe as a trader. You'd mainly be milked. But of course, you'd also be used for satisfaction; do you think being a slave means just lounging around?
The men earlier weren't bad. Are all men here like that?
Yes. Don't forget what Peridëis is. And don't forget your own constant arousal. That makes everyone look good when you're itching enough. No one's truly unattractive here. You find something appealing in everyone, and no one has to only pleasure themselves or can never be a slave.
Right now, fifteen minutes as a pleasure slave sounds good, Alisha said. Can I slip into the bushes to do something about this urge without burdening you?
Denied, Tim said. We're not starting that. I have a better idea, one that came to me when Anka was talking about Zelima.
What do you mean?
Tim smiled at Alisha oddly, and his pupils narrowed in a way that made her feel a thrill.
What are you planning? Alisha whispered. Her heart pounded.
Tim didn't answer but grabbed Alisha's wrists firmly. He kept looking into her eyes. You want fifteen minutes of slavery? Like Zelima? I owe you an answer about ropes and whips. Want it now? Right now?
Yes! Thank you for not forgetting. Alisha surged into a highly aroused state, breathing in gasps.
With one motion, Tim unrolled the rope he always carried at his side. He wrapped it around Alisha's wrists and tied her standing between two trees.

Yes, my lord, tie me, Alisha whispered, enslave me. She wanted to know how it felt to say such things. It aroused her even more.
First, I'll take your milk, Tim said. Moments later, he latched his mouth onto one breast, roughly milking the other, pulling it long and gripping into it to get more.
Alisha groaned in pain. Yes, use me, she breathed, exploit me, be rough with me.
After a while, Tim released her breast. I'll whip you with the switch, he said. He drew his switch from its holster and held it to Alisha's breast. He milked milk from her breast onto the switch to make it supple. Then he milked more and rubbed it onto Alisha's back and buttocks, reaching around her with his hand.
Finally, Tim stood behind Alisha. Legs apart!
Alisha quickly stood with her legs spread on the ground.
Count loudly! Tim commanded.
Then he struck with the switch.
Ha! One!
Ha! Two!
Ha! Three!
Alisha received twenty-eight strikes, gradually increasing in force. The first six strikes brought sharp, stinging pain, the next six burned fiercely, and after the twelfth strike, she suddenly entered a trance-like state. She floated. Her face showed an almost crazed bliss. She screamed in a way that a casual observer could hardly tell if they were cries of pain or pleasure. They were pleasure cries. Each further lash was pure ecstasy. Then she came.
Tim caught her, quickly untied the ropes, and held Alisha in his arms until her orgasm fully subsided.
Thank you! Alisha said, kissed Tim, and was truly grateful.
They covered a long distance before night fell. Alisha was glad she wasn't wearing panties, as her bottom stung. But she savored it.



Institute for Special Physics (Object P)

~~Telex~~

By courier!!!

What idiot would send THAT by telex ???

Sender: Office of the Minister
Recipient: Object P, Head of the Service Unit
Top Secret / TS

Pursuant to ministerial order, all reports pertaining to the subject complex "Object P" are henceforth to be transmitted exclusively by courier. Telex communications, even encrypted, are prohibited without exception. For your information, I am attaching the report that led to the order of the Minister for State Security.

[Original text of the report]

SUBJECT: Deconspiration[62] within the MfS of a report from Obj. P

We hereby report on a deconspiration within the MfS. After thorough investigation, an external deconspiration can be ruled out with near certainty.

Facts:

A telex originating from Object P, despite being clearly marked as Classified Secret, was mistakenly regarded by personnel as a narrative of pornographic nature from a private source. This was facilitated by report components that had a distinctly fairy-tale character. As a result, personnel of the telex and cipher service openly disseminated parts of the report in question, both in its original form and in modified versions, via the internal MfS telex network for entertainment purposes, particularly at night or on weekends and holidays during periods of low workload.

62 Conspiracy: In intelligence jargon, covert secret service activities. Deconspiracy is thus the revelation/unmasking of such activities.

Impact:

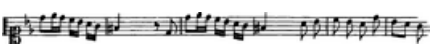
The dissemination of the text in question could only be contained, as it had already been reproduced too many times, and overly conspicuous investigations were to be avoided. The dissemination was facilitated by the fact that standard telex machines are always equipped with a punch tape perforator, allowing the text to be replicated virtually indefinitely.
The risk posed by the widely circulated texts is considered low, as no connection to official matters is mentioned or suggested, and, in our assessment, such a connection does not seem plausible. At most, a general risk could be seen, as is always associated with smut and filth literature.

Measures:

Disciplinary measures were deemed inadvisable for reasons of secrecy. To obscure the original text and reinforce the impression of a fictional background, numerous additional telexes with sexual content but different narrative contexts were circulated within the MfS.
Subsequently, after a certain waiting period, all telex stations within the MfS were generally inspected for unnecessarily stored punch tape rolls and telex documents, and, among other things, it was universally instructed that it is strictly forbidden to send private or non-official messages via the telex connections.

Three text variants of the report in question are attached in copy.

[The original includes approximately 1200 lines with the widely circulated text variants]



Comrade Gisela

Comrade Gisela, a woman in her early 50s, unmarried, slim, highly attractive, very well-groomed, highly intelligent and a member of the Central Party Control Commission (ZPKK), sat cursing in her official car, a Lada. A Soviet car not for nobodies, but even so, she usually needed only a few choice sentences, spoken in soft, friendly words, to make clear who she was.

She looked at the map lying on her knees. She probably should have requested a military map after all, as public maps near secret facilities were deliberately vague and riddled with inaccurate details. That was likely why she couldn't find her destination. The last village had still matched, but here she was stuck.

There! A tractor was approaching. Comrade Gisela waited until it came closer. She got out and waved to the tractor driver.

When the tractor reached her, it stopped, the door slammed open, and the farmer shouted over the engine noise: What's up?

I'm looking for something, Comrade Gisela shouted back.

Well, what then? I ain't a mind reader, lass.

Institute for Special Physics!

A what?

Institute for Special Physics!

Ain't no such thing here.

There is! It's got to be here!

Where then?

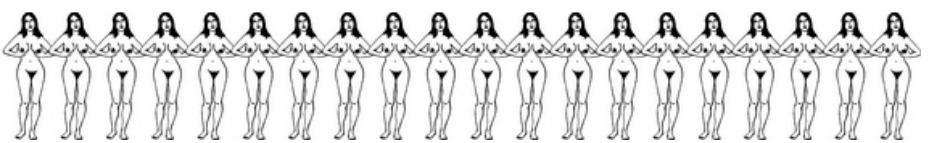
Somewhere right in the woods over there. (Comrade Gisela pointed in the direction.)

Oh, you mean the Stasi! the farmer shouted. Drive back to the road, then left, half a kilometer, then take the concrete slab path to the right. The night watchmen in uniform are on the right in the woods, and the really secret ones are on the left. But I don't reckon they're doing physics. At most *very* special physics.

The farmer mimicked masturbation gestures, waved, and drove off with his tractor.

Comrade Gisela was seething with rage. Why the Party funds a secret service when the first farmer you met already knew everything?!

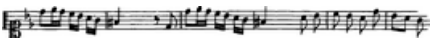
She started her car again and set off on the indicated route.



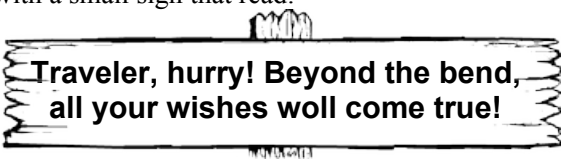
Battle Breasts

Anka had firm breasts, Alisha said to Tim.
Here we go again?
But it's true. And Zelima's especially. How do they do that?
Anka had smaller breasts, Zelima's were tiny, that's all. And just by the way, neither of their nipples and areolas are nearly as pretty as yours.
But mine are so... so uglily big.
Womanly.
So unattractive.
Heaven, arse, and thread! Take a look down at me.
You've got a hard-on.
But only since you started talking about your uglily big nipples and areolas. Is that answer enough?
But it could be even better...
Whaaat, my erection could be better?
Alisha laughed. No, she said, it's an utterly splendid erection, as perfect as it could ever be, the kind that would thrill any woman to no end.
Thanks. And?
And weren't Anka's areolas somehow prettier anyway? I'm always ashamed of mine.
Anka's areolas were less erotic.
But prettier.
Haven't we been over this a few times? As a man who gets turned on by women, when it comes to things like breasts, I care less about abstract beauty and more about what your breasts do to me. Whether they arouse me. Yours arouse me a lot, but Anka's were just pretty. There's a craftsman's saying: "If it's too tight, it breaks." Applied to our topic, I'd translate it as: "After aesthetic comes boring."
What do you want? For men to pine at the sight of you or just gape?
Now Alisha had to laugh. But one thing's still overlooked—they always talk about the two roles of the breast, on one hand as an erotic breast and on the other as a nurturing breast. But you know what's missing?
???
The aggressive battle breast.
?????

Yes, it's true! Women check out other women's tits just as much as men do. But for a different reason: Are hers better than mine? And then they gear up, hustle around, outdo each other. For that, you need the firmly protruding breast.
You win.

Both laughed. Then they continued on their way.

The Half-Satyr

After several days of wandering along the azure paved path, Alisha and Tim reached a spot where a gray paved path branched off from the azure one. And the gray paved path led into a valley that diverged to the right from their valley. A branching valley was nothing new, nor was a branching path. But that wasn't the surprising part. The surprising part was something else entirely: Alisha saw a pole by the roadside with a small sign that read:



The sign triggers some kind of memory in me, Alisha wondered aloud. But I don't know what it is! And what's supposed to be in the other valley, where Peridëis is already hard to surpass as it is? Shall we go check it out?
We have time, Tim replied. But I find the sign strange.
Why?
Because the inhabitants can neither read nor write nor count. How are they supposed to make a sign like that? So it must have been made by a Peri or a visitor. But even then: Who is the sign meant for if no one can read it anyway? For the inhabitants, it would only arouse suspicion like hobo signs[63].
And what if the sign is meant for both of us?
Unlikely. And too vague. Besides, you're right to ask what's left to wish for in Peridëis. Let's have a picnic here first, and then I'll check it out. But preferably alone for now.
The two settled down by the roadside. Tim had fetched fresh water from the nearby stream, and Alisha had roamed around to see what special fruits the area offered. The meal, as always, was more than plentiful, and Alisha was glad that the food left no rolls of fat on her body. The meal concluded, as usual, with a

63 Hobo signs: Secret symbols left by vagrants, e.g., on house walls, as hints for other vagrants.

half-hour of rest, during which Tim took his share from Alisha's breasts, while Alisha used the arousal that arose to pleasure herself with her middle finger. Her noticeably fuller breasts delighted not only Tim, but his enthusiasm also fed back to Alisha, making her breasts even more than before a source of her own desire and pleasure.
But eventually, both were rested and content.
I'm going to check what's around the bend in that other valley, Tim said. Just stay here.
I can use the time for a bath, Alisha suggested.
Good idea, Tim said. I expect it'll take two or three hours.
Then Tim set off. Down the gray path into the other valley.
Alisha took off her dress, walked naked to the stream, found a spot where the water had pooled into a small lake, and jumped in. Since there was plenty of time, she washed her hair too and decided to thoroughly rinse her dress. Drying was quick in Peridëis, but that wasn't the reason; feeling cold was unknown here. Even stark naked.
Afterward, Alisha wandered around to pass the time and discovered those eggplant-like fruits she'd come across when she first arrived in Peridëis. When picked and warmed in your hands (or even inside your lap), they swelled dramatically and vibrated.
Should she try those fruits again?
No. Without Tim around, the appeal was much less.
Alisha left the fruits hanging.
Out of sheer boredom, she pleasured herself once more. Quite mundanely, with her finger.
Where could Tim be?

ω ω ω

Tim had walked along the gray paved path, turned into the side valley, and continued a bit further, but found nothing.
He stopped and let his gaze wander.
Finally, he spotted a kind of castle atop a solitary small rock.
And that was supposed to fulfill all wishes?!
Tim shook his head.
Then, with a leap, a fur-covered figure sprang at Tim from behind, let out a cry, and in a split second, Tim was bound on the ground.
There was no point struggling against these ropes. They would loosen on their own after some time, but until then, no sharp edge or anything else would help—so tough were these bindings.
Tim lay on the ground, cursing. How could he have let himself be so easily ambushed?

The fur-covered figure leaned over Tim and grunted with satisfaction. It was a half-satyr. True satyrs don't act with intent. But this one had even tied him up, which required at least limited reasoning. Half-satyrs never came about without outside intervention. These pitiful creatures were always the deliberate creation of someone who intentionally kept them in this state, obedient tools without their own will. You'd catch a satyr and give it just enough milk to tame it, but only for the one providing the milk. And then it would do anything that person wanted, without regaining its reason or free will.
Tim decided to conserve his strength and do nothing. The only annoyance was that Alisha was left alone, unaware.
But with considerable effort, Tim fumbled at his belt and managed to let his switch fall to the ground, hoping it would serve as a sign for Alisha.
The hairy half-satyr hoisted Tim onto his shoulder with ease, carrying him over his neck like a sack of flour. Tim was genuinely amazed at the strength satyrs possessed. Like full satyrs, the half-satyr had a perpetual erection. Outwardly, Tim couldn't have distinguished him from a satyr. Only his behavior was different, as satyrs simply let themselves go.
The half-satyr set off. Ten meters later, Tim let his rope slide to the ground in the direction they were heading. Fifty meters further, he dropped his empty belt as well. Hopefully, that would be enough to hint to Alisha where he'd gone. Alisha wasn't foolish, Tim consoled himself. He had no more items to drop. The half-satyr didn't care at all. Tim could've written a letter and thrown it to the ground if he'd had one.
The half-satyr carried Tim through the forest without any sign of fatigue.
Half an hour later, they reached the castle. It stood on a rock surrounded by flowing water. A rickety old drawbridge led over the stream to a gate that desperately needed repair. The drawbridge couldn't be raised, and the gate couldn't be closed, that much was clear at first glance.
Inside, a rock crevice led up to the castle.
And oh, what a state the castle was in! The roof was full of holes, the shutters hung crooked, the walls were cracked, riddled with gaps, and crumbling. But the half-satyr kept going until they reached the small castle tower. The tower was in a somewhat passable condition, and the courtyard right in front was tidy and even designed with some taste, though the repairs weren't always beyond reproach. But it was livable, and a wooden fence enclosed this part of the inner courtyard.
The satyr grunted loudly.
Moments later, the door of the small tower opened.
A cry of delight rang out, and a somewhat hoarse female voice sounded: Oh, what have you caught for me, my furry darling! Bring him in, the treat, the fine one!
It was a very slender woman with light blonde hair tightly pinned up, wearing a skintight top of soft black leather adorned with numerous gold-shimmering

crystals. Fool's gold? Could that be? Her breasts protruded firmly and flawlessly from the leather top.She wasn't wearing a skirt, but long black leather stockings made of the same soft black leather as her top. These stockings reached just below her buttocks and left plenty of room for her sex. Her buttocks (a bit scrawny, Tim thought) and pubis remained exposed, like her breasts. By Peridëis standards, her breasts were rather small (in the mundane world, they wouldn't have seemed so) and gave an unusually firm, almost taut impression. Not bad, Tim had to admit quietly, even if it wasn't his favorite shape.

The half-satyr carried Tim into the castle tower and up to the second floor. Good thing the steps were stone, given how dilapidated everything else looked.

Upstairs was a bright bay room, in the center of which stood a large, solid wooden table that was anything but rickety. It could only stand there because the room had a stone floor. The second floor was built on an elevated rock outcrop. The room had windows in two directions, several chests were visible, and by one window stood a large table made of rock. Or rather, it was rock, surely there long before the castle was built.

The half-satyr tossed Tim onto the large solid wooden table like a wet sack.

Ouch! Tim cried, more in protest, as he'd managed to brace himself well enough.

Don't be like that, my sweet morsel, the woman said in her hoarse voice from behind the half-satyr. Now you'll be nicely tied up.

And with deft movements, the woman had, one-two-three, bound Tim's spread legs to the table on either side, then his arms. The arms only on one side for now, as the half-satyr's bindings hadn't yet worn off—so his arms couldn't yet be tied separately on each side of the table. Finally, for good measure, his torso was secured to the table as well.

The woman searched Tim and found the crystal.

Well, well, she said, we don't want to escape, do we? She took the crystal and placed it, clearly visible to Tim, on the large stone table near the window. Then she hammered at it with another stone until the crystal was smashed into tiny golden pieces. She struck with fury, as the fool's gold was tough. It took a while. Sparks flew to the side repeatedly.

There, the woman said, out of breath, when she was done. Now you belong to me!

Tim had his doubts. For now, though, she was right. He was bound and probably too agitated to perform a witch's leap for days. But there was something intriguing: this woman clearly had no fear of fool's gold and knew its secret. She must, like him, come from the mundane world. What did she want from him that she couldn't have gotten far more easily from a resident?

He didn't have to ask.

You, my handsome, the woman said, you're my slave now. What a catch! A bailiff, a *bailiff*!

But, she paused, I should reward my furry darling. Come here! she called sternly, and the half-satyr came with a leap.
The woman reached into one of the chests and pulled out a pot, its lid tightly knotted with a cord. That was apparently enough to make its contents inaccessible to the half-satyr. The pot contained dried breastmilk turned to powder. The woman poured some into her open hand and offered it to the half-satyr. He greedily licked her hand clean.
There, you've done enough now, the woman said in her hoarse tone, but quite tenderly, to the half-satyr. You may go sleep now. Go!
The half-satyr retreated, grumbling. The woman watched him until he was gone. She carefully sealed the pot again, placed it back in the chest, and closed the chest's lid.
My darling has a nice big penis, doesn't he? she said, turning to the bound Tim. But sadly, his seed is worthless, it has no power. And that brings us to you. A simple man would've been enough to provide usable essence for my purposes. And a visitor from the mundane world with his great strength would've been a stroke of luck beyond measure. But a bailiff living in celibacy?
She shook with laughter. Her hoarse laughter.
You, my beautiful man, she whispered in his ear, you're the crowning glory. Through your foolish abstinence, you've gathered so much life energy in you. So much life energy that I likely won't need to catch a second man to achieve my goal. I'm going to take that life energy from you now. I'll suck every last drop of seed out of you until your mental light goes out. And don't think you'll get any replenishment from me. I want to take, not give. And I hate giving milk! I hate that I can't resist these swollen things! And the pain when they're full! I, oh my handsome captive, keep my milk for myself. And so I collect more and more milk in me, more and more, and that will make me powerful. Only when the two breasts press too painfully, only then do I express milk. But do you even know what expressing is?
Tim shook his head.
Well, the woman said, that's my secret. A secret unknown in Peridëis, because all those cows are obsessed with giving as much milk as possible. My secret goes the other way: you don't stimulate the nipples, quite the opposite, you don't touch them at all. Not at all! Not a bit! You only stroke the sides of the breasts with your fingers, from back to front, but not all the way to the nipples. And even that only until the milk that was pressing most painfully is out. Then you stop! That's just enough to keep my furry darling from turning back into a full satyr, but far from enough for him to become human again. And I, I keep my strength within me. And do you know what task you'll fulfill?
Tim shook his head.
You, my handsome, will give your seed. Your strong, supremely potent seed!

And that seed will elevate me to a Peri!
Now Tim grew uneasy. He didn't believe it would work, but the woman believed it. A madwoman. And if she forced him to ejaculate again and again, there was a real danger he'd waste away into a satyr. He'd been told how it worked: because of the pleasurable side of satisfaction, it wasn't unbearable enough to trigger a leap to the transition, which would've let him escape the danger. And once you were a satyr, reports said you felt no desire to leave that state. You followed your urges, food was abundant everywhere, only the mind was gone, but you didn't feel that as suffering when you had none. A true trap, the only one in Peridëis. A trap just for men. And he was a man.
But what to do?
He had no time to think. Nor could he manage to flash away. The leather-clad, high-heeled blonde gave Tim a cruel smile.
Now you'll be drained, my handsome, and you can do *nothing* about it! Look, I'm even making an effort, because I *want* you to enjoy it. I even want you to enjoy it *a lot*.
And she grasped his penis with her hand. A warm hand.
Does that feel good?
The penis stiffened. Tim tried to fight it with his thoughts. This woman stirred something in him that responded. Not everything is explainable. The penis grew even stiffer.
So you like it? Who would've thought. I'll do more that you like.
And the blonde began gently and slowly pulling back the foreskin of the penis. All the way back. A tiny pause, and she slowly pulled the foreskin forward again.
That's nice, isn't it? And look at my breasts. Aren't they wonderfully firm? They stick out like a fifteen-year-old's. And look at my thighs...
The blonde woman stood up. But she kept Tim's penis in her hand, gently and slowly moving the foreskin back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth... When the blonde stood, her pubis came into Tim's view. And her thighs. Firm, taut thighs. Look how interesting my pubis is, the blonde said, placing one leg on the heavy wooden table.
Against his will, Tim's gaze fell on the blonde's pubis. And there he saw... the situation wasn't indifferent to her; she was highly aroused herself. Her vulva was swollen, her labia parted. And not only that, everything glistened wet and slippery.
Tim fought against the intense sensations, but it was no use.
Now the blonde began to gradually quicken the movements on his penis. Without overdoing it, though. She intensified the movements with skill and practiced restraint.
Tim groaned.
When he opened his eyes again, his gaze fell on the blonde's breasts: they began

to drip. A moment later, a trickle of milk ran down her breasts. And moments after that, milk sprayed out. First one stream, then two, and finally many. A veritable shower of milk poured over Tim's body, his face, his uniform, everywhere—what a shame, he would've loved to have it for himself now. He tried to catch at least some of the milk with his mouth to offset a little of what the blonde was trying to take from him.
The blonde furiously continued her hand movements.
You can't do anything about it either, Tim thought to himself, *no remedy can stop your squirting breasts now*. It was obvious that the blonde was highly aroused sexually. With full, throbbing breasts in such a state, the milk came on its own. It was the same bodily mechanism: the breasts were directly connected to the lap, as everyone in Peridëis knew all too well. Even in the mundane world, where it wasn't talked about, mothers felt it when their bodies rewarded them for nursing their children. They just didn't speak of it, only exchanging knowing, smiling, silent glances in betraying moments. Of course, you could fight against the reward with all your might, but then the milk flow would dwindle. A nasty trap. In Peridëis, however, willpower couldn't stop the milk flow triggered by feelings, nor the feelings that triggered the milk flow. The feelings didn't care what the will wanted; they carved their own path.
The blonde began to wail angrily, which only made her breasts produce more, and she tried to masturbate the penis faster.
Eventually, despite the grotesque situation, Tim could no longer hold back, partly because the blonde was quite skilled and far from unattractive. His breathing and groaning betrayed to the blonde that his loins were already tightening. And then she leaned forward, took his penis deep into her mouth, and began to suck rhythmically. The warmth of her mouth and the intensified sensations made Tim arch and reach a powerful climax. He spilled forcefully into her mouth, again, again, and again. She sucked with utmost sensitivity in his rhythm to extract every last drop of seed. And swallowed it down. Then she licked his penis clean, ensuring not a single bit was wasted.
When Tim's penis gave no more drops, the blonde left him lying there and exited the room. But Tim wasn't alone for long. After perhaps ten minutes, she returned. And Tim was up again. He writhed under her masturbating hand because her movements, so soon after his ejaculation, were painful. The blonde adjusted. Torture wasn't her goal, but to drain Tim completely. She slowed her movements, became more careful, much gentler. And indeed, this way, the penis rose again, still quite soft at first, but after some time it hardened, and Tim couldn't resist. Unfortunately, the blonde's breasts no longer sprayed as they had the first time, likely because the pressure had eased. They dripped, but it wasn't enough to get his mouth within reach of the milk. The blonde noticed.
No, my handsome, she said, you're getting none of my milk. You must stay pure.

Without anything from me, of me. Your strength must be entirely external.
She intensified her technique on Tim's penis. It took longer this time, but again he lacked the strength to resist and spilled into her mouth.
Once more, the blonde left the room, leaving Tim lying there. And again, after ten minutes, she returned to suck the juice from his loins once more. And again, she succeeded, even if Tim spilled far less seed.
When the blonde returned to Tim after another short break, he had had to relieve himself; there was no choice, and Tim no longer cared, too exhausted. To his surprise, the blonde wasn't outraged. No. She first washed him thoroughly. Then she took time to retie his hands, as the original binding had loosened. Tim still couldn't have freed himself.
The blonde washed Tim carefully, not roughly. You could tell he had value. She also gave him food. Good food. She gave him water to drink. Good water. Afterward, she wiped his mouth.
But then the blonde took Tim's penis in her hand again. She aroused him cautiously but firmly. And enticed him with her breasts. And let him smell her pubis, revealing to Tim that she was intensely aroused, which unfortunately had a strong effect on him. The blonde masturbated the now-erect penis until it gave up its seed again, not much more, but still some. The blonde was ready with her mouth in time, her hand stroking the penis from the base to coax out a few more drops that her sucking mouth alone hadn't yet extracted.
This went on through the night. The blonde stayed with him, stroking him in between. Especially his testicles. She teased him with all the tricks of the trade. She probably believed this would produce more seed. Or maybe it did. Or this desire fueled her own lust. Who knows.
Tim wasn't just tormented by the pain in his penis—he'd developed severe body aches and felt blows on his skin, as if being whipped. The cruel part was that these pains mingled with pleasure, especially since the blonde kept him in a state of sensual arousal the whole time. And Tim began to understand why one could become a satyr. You had to fight against it, but that was infinitely hard when pleasure was happening at the same time. He had slipped into a trance-like state, a swaying between lust and pain. And with his essence being drained so quickly, there was a real danger he didn't have much time left. He'd long lost his will.
Finally, deep in the night, the blonde was tired enough to leave Tim alone.
There, my handsome, she breathed in her hoarse way, stroking his testicles, now sleep well and make lots of fresh seed for me. And after sunrise, my handsome, I'll drain you completely.
She left the room.
Tim fell asleep minutes later.
No, not quite.
He would've fallen asleep, if...

...if at that moment Alisha hadn't slipped into the room.
You poor thing, Alisha cried, I was so scared for you! I had to watch the whole time as she took your seed.
Milk, Tim whispered, milk!
Hastily, Alisha held her breast to his mouth, and Tim began to suck weakly. Alisha milked with her hand, pressing her milk into his mouth. Gradually, his sucking grew stronger.
Shouldn't we escape first? Alisha asked quietly.
No, Tim replied, no... strength, ...first... milk!
Alisha helped as best she could, squeezing the last bit of milk from her breast. She kissed Tim on his sweat-soaked forehead and whispered: I couldn't come sooner, that creature was there. And I could never have overpowered the woman.
Only after quite a while did Tim stop. Alisha, he whispered, untie me now, I think I'm okay again.
Alisha untied him, first his hands, then his torso, then his feet.
What you saw was a half-satyr, Tim whispered, a satyr brought only halfway out of its state and deliberately kept in that half-state. A subservient beast. You were right to wait; your scent alone would've driven it wild; this was the only way it could work.
Tim stood up.
His gait was very unsteady. Alisha supported him, alarmed.
It'll be fine, Tim whispered. The milk just needs to take effect. Give me a minute or two.
Tim stood motionless in his current position, and Alisha held his arm tightly. Only Tim's loud breathing was audible; otherwise, it was dead silent.
Suddenly, Tim whispered: Come, let's get out of here.
Are you okay now?
Much better. At least enough to escape.
Alisha handed Tim his belt, his switch, and the coiled rope he'd carried at his side. She had found the items, drawn the right conclusions, and brought them along.
Tim paused to fasten the belt. He kept the switch and rope in his hand.
They crept quietly down the stairs. What luck that it was a stone staircase; a wooden one in the castle's poor condition would've surely creaked.
The courtyard gate outside is open, Alisha whispered. I only had to close the front door so no one would notice.
Got it, Tim whispered.
But then Tim stumbled, still too weak. A loud clatter echoed as he knocked something over.
In the next moment, a massive figure approached, grumbling loudly, from the

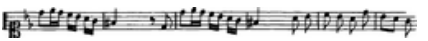
living quarters on the ground floor, heading their way. A hellish racket broke out.
Out! Tim roared.
Alisha bolted for the exit and leapt into the night.
Tim had an advantage: he was in the corridor, so the half-satyr couldn't use its full strength. He, in turn, could leverage his skill and planning.
At his feet lay what he'd knocked over. A stool.
Tim threw the stool at the half-satyr's legs.
The half-satyr crashed to the ground.
Tim swung his switch and struck the half-satyr's knuckles and fingers with full force several times.
The half-satyr howled in pain. But most importantly: its hands were out of commission for a fight for now. Tim seized the moment, swiftly binding the satyr's hands with his rope and tying them to its feet.
Then Tim leapt into the night too. Where was Alisha? Ah—she was already at the gate, holding it open for their escape. Fantastic! Tim ran. He wasn't fast, lacking the strength. But still.
Alisha slammed the door shut behind them. They raced across the rest of the courtyard, well-lit by the moon.
They were already crossing the bridge. Tim was truly low on strength. But there were no sounds behind them; they had stopped several times to listen.
What luck.
Come, let's walk normally now. Can we get lost? I'm not quite myself yet.
I don't think so, Alisha said. The high cliffs give good orientation.
Lead me, Tim said. I'm not reliable yet. You know, I can't see much right now, and I can't think clearly either.
Alisha took his hand. They walked straight through the nocturnal forest. The moon lit their way. And if you held an arm in front of your face, no branch would unexpectedly hit you.
Finally, they reached the path.
Which path is this, Tim asked, the blue or the gray?
The gray, Alisha answered.
Sure?
Sure. We're still in the side valley. We need to go left now.
Walking was easier now. There had still been no sounds behind them.
Eventually, they reached the fork with the sign. Alisha wanted to rip it out of the ground and throw it aside in anger.
Leave it, Tim said. At least for now. And we should find a cave or passage to hide in for the night.
Ten minutes later, they found a tiny, perfectly sized cave in the rock.
Alisha did her best to keep Tim awake long enough to drink as much milk from her breast as possible. And as he was already half-asleep, she milked as much as

she could into his mouth with her hand. He obediently swallowed it on her command. Then he fell asleep.
But Alisha forced herself to stay awake. Not that she was afraid of being found. They were too well hidden for that, and strangely, she never felt real fear in Peridëis anyway. No, she had something else in mind. She woke Tim after about two hours, knowing her breasts would be well-filled with milk again by then. And once more, she got him to drink everything she had to offer. Only then did she fall asleep in his arms. When she woke in the morning, her first thought was to tickle Tim's lips with her nipple to give him his life elixir. In the morning, he drank with his usual strength again. Alisha breathed a sigh of relief.
When Tim tried to stand, he was quite wobbly on his legs. But first, he hissed in pain and grabbed his penis.
What's wrong? Alisha asked, concerned.
Oh, nothing, Tim said, it's a trifle.
What do you mean, a trifle, if it hurts you?
Really! Tim said. The loss of my essence was significant, but this little issue with the penis will pass quickly.
And hissed in pain again.
Lie down! Alisha ordered sharply. And no arguments!
Obediently, Tim lay down.
On your back!
Does it have to...?
Yes, it does. Don't make a fuss. It's not the first time I've seen your penis.
Tim lay on his back, so Alisha could see his penis through the opening in his trousers.
Ouch! she said. She rubbed your penis raw.
Alisha carefully lifted the penis. Tim flinched again.
It's even a bit bloody at the frenulum, Alisha said quietly.
Alisha thought for a moment. Then she said: Lie on your side.
Tim did so.
Alisha took fresh water and gently rinsed Tim's penis. But under the foreskin was impossible—Tim simply refused due to the pain.
But what if it gets infected? Alisha asked, worried.
It won't get infected, Tim said. That just doesn't happen here, you know? It'll be fine in two or three days. Don't worry, I'm a tough guy.
You tough guys could sometimes be a bit less tough, Alisha scolded.
Tim stood up.
What are you doing? Alisha asked.
I need to pee, that's all.
Tim stood a bit away by a tree.
Aaaaah, fffffff, hmmmmmmm, ouch!

Alisha laughed.
Then they gathered breakfast near their cave. For the little effort they put in, the result was quite decent. Though Tim said the half-satyr couldn't do anything without the blonde. She probably had to bring it right to the spot where Tim was captured, as it likely couldn't understand more than simple commands.

Since Tim still needed recovery time, there was plenty of time to talk about what had happened. Tim shook his head, summing up: The idea that sperm has magical powers is total nonsense, he said, but try telling that to people who believe what they want to believe. Its value probably just comes from men having so little of it compared to milk, and that they waste away if they give up too much. But as for this woman: It's astonishing she still has any milk in her breasts if she avoids stimulation all the time. And even then: if too much milk stays in the breast—I think about a fifth of what's there—the breast reduces milk production. It responds to demand. In other words, she's basically doing the exact opposite of what she wants. She's drying out her breast, and then she'd have less essence, not more. It's probably only Peridëis that keeps her producing milk at all. Unless she's one of those women who naturally produce milk constantly.
Well, he concluded. So she'll keep living alone in her crumbling castle.
Why's she even doing this? Alisha asked.
Maybe just because she's a rotten person. She's probably gotten stuck in her own personality. Did you catch that she's from the mundane world?
Whaaaat?!
Alisha was genuinely outraged. How do you know?
She found my crystal and wasn't afraid of it. And she couldn't have been a Peri, because she wanted to become one.
But why does she do this? I mean, she didn't even really enjoy it?...
That wasn't entirely true.
...Still, that wasn't the point. Why doesn't she find something that could make her happy, like Anka and Zelima?
Like I said, she's stuck. A vicious cycle. I once read an article about hallucinogens, drugs that alter perception. Some people experience hell when they take them. And that's how it seems with this blonde here. Someone would need to take her by the hand and show her life can be beautiful. Just like that.
But not me.
Not me either, Tim said. Besides, we know too little about her. Instead, we should keep wandering tomorrow.
Are you fit again?
I think so. Your milk is better than the residents'. Forgotten?
Alisha laughed. But then she asked: Won't you get in trouble with the Peris? Because of your celibacy?

No, Tim said, definitely not. I didn't bring this on myself and resisted as best I could.
And was she good?
Who?
The blonde?
What?
Well... Alisha hesitated ...she did it to you. Many times.
No, Tim said firmly. She's not my dream, the blonde. And just before I came, I always closed my eyes and thought of you.
Thank you.
When they passed the fork with the wooden sign, Alisha angrily kicked over the pole with the inscribed board. That much was necessary. This time, Tim didn't stop her.



The Pony Cart

Alisha and Tim didn't rush excessively on their journey along the azure paved path, as just a few kilometers away, it was unlikely anyone would follow them. Besides, the half-satyr and his mistress had only succeeded due to the element of surprise. Tim assured Alisha that he'd normally have given the half-satyr a proper thrashing. But what can you do? A surprise is a surprise. And at least Tim had been rightly suspicious when he saw the sign.
How are you feeling now? Alisha asked after it was already noon and Tim had been walking the whole time.
Worn out but good, Tim replied. And he added: You know, the worst part wasn't even that mix of pain and pleasure...
Pain from the lack of milk?
That too. But when a man is satisfied so quickly in succession, that hurts on its own.
I thought that wasn't so easy because the penis goes soft after ejaculation?
She used all her skills—hand, mouth, showing herself off...
Could I do that too...?
Alisha, enough! That woman doesn't come close to you. Can I continue?
Yes, Alisha grumbled.
The real worst part, Tim went on, was that I gradually slipped into a kind of lustful daze, like a trance. It was like a whirlpool, exhausting to swim against, but much more pleasant to just drift. I only held back by telling myself that living in a daze can't be the purpose of life. And of course, there was you, that you'd be left alone, and so on. That purpose, that meaning... that's the only thing that stopped me. Even now.

Even now? Alisha echoed, stunned.
Yes. I said it was a pleasant state in itself. There's a kind of pull to go back...
Alisha stopped and looked intently into Tim's eyes.
Tim looked down, embarrassed.
For heaven's sake, Alisha whispered. Hey, you're out! You're you again. And... and... and.
A thought struck Alisha: And you might never have had this again!
She lifted both her breasts with her hands, as she'd seen in those images and on sculptures in the town they'd visited. She thrust her breasts toward Tim. Come, she whispered, I have good milk for you. Just for you. Sweet milk. Full of strength. And it gives me great pleasure when you suck it from my breasts! It helps me wonderfully cope with the fact that your penis can't enter me. Take the beauty I offer you, enjoy me, not that satyr state, not that trap you can't escape alone.
Alisha pulled Tim down to the ground, onto the meadow lining the azure paved path on both sides. What did it matter if a few flowers got crushed? There were so many. Life was beautiful, too beautiful to waste in a daze.
Alisha lay on her side and pulled Tim down, guiding his head to her breast, which she held out to him with one hand. She squeezed a squirt of milk from her nipple to his lips to entice him, teasing his lips with her nipple to make them part.
Something jolted in Tim. He sighed and latched on with all his strength. Alisha cried out but felt her breast respond instantly, milk gushing forcefully into Tim's mouth. Deep in her breasts, it hurt, so strongly had they reacted. But it felt good, and it made Alisha happy to hear and feel Tim swallowing gulp after gulp, greedily sucking for more.
Relaxation washed over Alisha. The tension of the past days fell away. She felt Tim's sucking become less greedy, deeper, and more rhythmic. That's how it felt right. That's how it should be. That's how everything was good.
Alisha relaxed even more. Everything was good. In this beautiful world. A feeling of happiness rose within her. She had a miracle drug that would help Tim. Desired by all men. She was a woman, and that was something. Something very special here in Peridëis. This wonderful paradise. The men needed her. Her and her breasts. And the milk now flowing from them. And it felt good. Good and right. And relaxing. Very, very relaxing. And Alisha felt very, very happy.
Was something building in her lap?
At that moment, Alisha felt precisely how the milk flowed through her nipple. Tim was sucking so, so perfectly. He stretched her nipple just the right way. That's how it had to be. Exactly so. So.
Something more was building in Alisha's lap. More precisely: her pleasure bud. No. Not just that. It was already spreading between her legs and into her thighs.
But not like a sharp jet of water. More like a gentle wave with an alarming

amount of force.
Alisha suddenly knew she could solve math problems right now, and the wave wouldn't go away. Interesting thought. Oh, math, what a beautiful thing. So beautiful...
No, it wouldn't be good to stay on the wave; she'd probably go mad in that state.
Keep going like that, Alisha whispered to Tim. Don't change a thing, don't change, keep going exactly like that, yes, exactly like that. Keep going, keep going, keep going, just like that, just like that, yes, yes, keep going...
Suck by suck, Alisha felt the milk flow from deep within to the front through her nipples. And how the nipple was stretched long.
Suck by suck, the nipples sent gentle electric signals to her lap. Especially when the nipple was stretched just right.
Suck by suck, stretch by stretch, the area swelling with immense force in her lap grew. No, not just her lap. Everything around it. No, not just around it, it was spreading further through Alisha's body, finally, finally rising, swelling, and... Haaaaaaaaa... seizing her entire body in one, exactly *one* wave, flooding up to her face, overrun by an offshoot of the wave, all the way to the tips of her hair. It was a warm wave, a gentle wave, but a mighty wave that tolerated nothing but itself and flooded every last corner of Alisha's body.
Alisha wept with joy.
Time passed...
Tim stroked her hair. He had slowly, very slowly, stopped drinking, matching Alisha's sensations as best he could.
Alisha must have lain on her back for half an hour afterward, recovering from the orgasm.
Then Tim presented her with a smile, holding two new fool's gold crystals he'd freshly chipped from the rock nearby. He gently pulled Alisha up, gave her a kiss (yes!!!!), and they went together to look at the spot in the rock again.
Memorize it! Tim said. This is our new meeting point if anything goes wrong.
Alisha came back to herself. Only her lap remained veeeeery, veeeeery relaxed, but that felt good, and Alisha indulged her lap in that state.
On the way back to the stream, they laughed as they ran through trees and bushes to gather their lunch. My goodness, how easy it was in Peridëis!
Alisha had hitched up her dress to carry the gathered food when they suddenly heard a sound like a horse cart. What? The two hurried to the azure paved path to investigate.

Since the valley curved here, Alisha and Tim had taken a shortcut and reached the azure paved path before the strange sound approached. Both looked expectantly in the direction the vehicle had to come from. And there it came.
But what was that?! They had heard correctly—it was a cart approaching. A very

small and light one, by the way. It had only one axle and thus only two wheels, with nothing on top but an equally light seat. And on the seat sat a woman. Alisha peered skeptically, as this woman was dressed entirely in soft black leather, like the woman in the castle. But this time, it was a black, front-open leather skirt and a kind of leather harness made of various riveted straps, half-covered by her massive breasts. Yet she seemed entirely different from the woman in the dilapidated castle, more the type to enjoy life, as evidenced by the size of her mighty breasts and thighs, for she was well-fed.
But her horse was something special. Or rather, her pony. For the cart was a pony cart.
Except no pony was harnessed to it.
The pony cart with the stout woman was pulled by a man. A naked man. More precisely, a naked man harnessed like a real pony. With tack. Leather straps ran over his body and head, he wore proper blinders on either side of his eyes, a bit in his mouth, and two shafts were attached to his tack on either side. Even his penis was framed by leather straps, swinging back and forth as he moved. And atop his head, two huge colorful feathers bobbed, fastened to the tack.
Brrrrrrrr! the woman called when she saw Alisha and Tim.
Obediently, her pony—no, the man—stopped. He was completely out of breath.
Hey there, who are you? the stout woman called.
Greetings, we're on our way to the Red Rose City, to the Peri there, Tim replied.
Then the girl must be someone special, the stout woman responded, summoned by a Peri and with a real bailiff as an escort!
Indeed, Tim replied. The Peri has a task for her. But we don't know what yet. And you, Tim added, what brings you through the land?
I'm a slave trader, the stout woman answered, and I'm scouting the route so my wares don't get unnecessarily worn out.
Slave trader! Alisha echoed, shocked.
No worries, I'm an honest one, the stout woman replied, laughing at Alisha's expression. I don't take goods of dubious origin or poach.
That's a relief, Alisha said.
Tim chuckled.
Alisha stuck her tongue out at him.
You know what, said the stout woman, the slave trader, it's about time my pony got a break anyway. And if it's alright with you, I'd love to invite myself to a meal with you.
Now it was Alisha who giggled. Oh, please, please, she said, there's plenty to eat. And she gestured to the trees and bushes surrounding them.
Well then, take care of our sustenance, Tim picked up the thread. Off you go and fetch us some tasty things. And he suddenly lifted her dress, and ouch! Alisha got a smack on the bottom. Alisha understood and seized the chance to avoid staying

alone with the stout slave trader. So she skipped off to see what other culinary delights the area had to offer. Who knows, who knows... But Tim stayed. The stout woman climbed down from her cart. She looked around, spotted a bush with fruits she liked, unharnessed her pony, and led it to the bush. The man—no, the pony—immediately bit into one of the fruits and savored it. He didn't use his hands. The stout woman loosely tied her pony's leather strap around a branch and inspected her pony closely from head to toe. Then she rummaged through her pony cart, pulling out various items: a pretty blanket she spread on the ground to sit on, but also dishes and other things. Tim, quite curious, helped her.
Alisha returned, carrying a heap of food in her hitched-up skirt. As she set it down, the stout woman not-so-subtly eyed her from head to toe.
My pony urgently needs to mount a woman, she said. It's too nervous. A pony needs its share. But I don't do it with my own pony; that's bad for discipline. Are you wet right now? she asked, addressing Alisha.
Alisha looked surprised at Tim, who was sitting cross-legged on the spread blanket. His eyes were laughing, but he gave no sign she could interpret as a yes or no.
Alisha turned back to the stout woman and stammered ...at the moment, I'm... well, quite satisfied just now, I'm terribly sorry.
The stout woman sighed. Then my stallion will have to hold out a bit longer. And so will I. But if he bolts, it's your fault. She winked at Alisha.
Alisha breathed a sigh of relief. Her own lap still had that pleasantly weightless feeling from her recent release, and she didn't want that to change.

During the shared meal, the woman explained, at Alisha's prompting, that it was the man's deepest desire to serve her as a pony. Even uphill.
Alisha and Tim laughed.
What's more, the stout slave trader said, he demands no other reward than to be treated like a normal pony, allowed to pull her, but also receiving the attention due a good pony. The whip is given to the pony sparingly, not excessively. Only today was one of those days when something was off, though you never knew what. That's why she'd hoped to find in Alisha a mare for mounting. Hoped in vain. Oh, she complained, cheap ponies these days have way too much upkeep, need to ejaculate every two hours, and then require milk *every* time to recover.
Speaking of milk. The stout slave trader clicked her tongue.
The pony came running instantly.
Here! Drink! the stout slave trader said, pointing to her ample breasts.
The pony immediately lay down and drank from the side. Given the size of her enormous breasts, this was no issue at all and didn't disturb the stout slave trader's chatting or eating.
Tell me, Alisha asked curiously, do such big breasts give more milk?

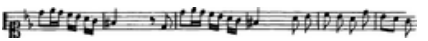
Tim nudged Alisha's side. Alisha!
It's fine, the stout slave trader laughed. Sadly, no, I wish there were more. I have slaves with downright tiny breasts who produce many times as much milk. Why do you think I'm a trader? The best are those pert little things crisscrossed with visible veins. And medium-sized sagging breasts that bulge nicely outward in the middle. Believe me, I'm an expert. But there are surprises too, just not with me.
I've still always gotten full, the pony chimed in, and your gorging has produced the most splendid curves I've ever held.
Will you shut up? Swish! The pony got a smack on the bottom and nearly choked. In an instant, it was back where it was supposed to be.
Oh, these excessive ponies, the stout slave trader continued. Cheap ponies (the ones that need to ejaculate every two hours) require too much milk. What that costs! Even if it's just the time! Plus, afterward, they're satisfied for a while and reluctant to keep pulling the cart. They pull best with pressure in their loins, let's be clear. But with skilled use of the whip, it's manageable. You just have to tend to them more, and after a while, the pony's erection returns, and it pulls willingly as best it can. Expensive racing ponies for travel, though, you can forget. They ejaculate after the shortest time, which is no use at all. That's why there's sand on the ground at pony races, so they don't slip, and all the pit stops. Have you ever seen a race like that? No? Doesn't matter, they take forever to finish anyway, and work ponies are far more useful, they last much longer. Sadly, they're lazier overall, slower, and barely handle peak loads.
Stop your whining already, Tim laughed. Tell us, what have you experienced on your travels?
Oh, plenty, the stout woman said, dropping the complaints. From then on, she recounted the most astonishing events she'd encountered on her journeys from market to market. She told Alisha and Tim about a land where she'd seen pink dwarfs with enormous penises. So huge, they transported them in wheelbarrows.
You're not pulling our leg?! Alisha laughed.
No, the stout woman assured her. They're indescribably stupid and forgetful. That's probably why, rumor has it, they're taken to fulfill the dark fantasies of certain women, who they can't tell tales about afterward. Despite conservation efforts, some ladies have allegedly poached these pink dwarfs and kept them under appalling conditions. That's likely how their enormous penises developed over time. As far as can be learned, nothing was known of the pink dwarfs' massive endowment in earlier times.
Alisha's eyes widened. Can body parts grow that quickly, just because others have a need for it?
Oh, that happens even where we come from, Tim said, looking meaningfully into Alisha's eyes. Some African tribes have women with really *very* large buttocks. And by *very*, I mean *very*. The men of those tribes are apparently *very* into it, and

so it developed over time[64]. From their perspective, women of other peoples are completely underdeveloped.
Oh, Alisha giggled, if I'm reading your *very* ordinary glances correctly, you're *pretty* very into my arse too. Will that make it bigger?
Tim played along: If you can wait four or five thousand years, why not!
Alisha stuck her tongue out at him, and the stout woman laughed.
Do you deal in such specialties? Alisha asked.
No, the stout woman, the slave trader, said in a serious tone. Specialties, yes, but I don't burden myself with shady business. I take regular slaves on commission.
On commission? Alisha asked. Then you're more of a broker than a trader.
How else could it work legally? the slave trader wondered. Otherwise, I'd soon have a bunch of good-for-nothings and dried-up complainers I can't get rid of. Besides, men often wildly overestimate what they can handle, and the women nag endlessly about exactly how they want to be enslaved, subjugated, whipped, and ravished. On commission, the goods make an effort and submit completely voluntarily to my strict discipline. Those who don't want to or can't are removed from the inventory after a grace period. Done. That's how you breed good, solid stock. Shady characters, on the other hand, only deal with slaves who don't cause them trouble because they already have special traits from the start.
Like what, for example? Alisha asked.
Very strong men, men with exceptional virility, those with large penises, unusually beautiful women, or women whose breasts dripped just from looking at them, but also *special* specialties.
Special specialties?
Well, everyone has their own preferences, like big breasts, small breasts, protruding breasts, sagging breasts, soft breasts, firm breasts, large nipples, small nipples, and more. There's a black market for that, because officially, you can't advertise such *special* specialties as *special*. So the low-grade stock gets a chance too.
And you claim you let those deals pass you by?
I always emphasize that I'm not selling a slave, for example, because of her *special* delicate pink nipples, if I notice the buyer is interested in delicate pink nipples. I always highlight the overall personality surrounding the delicate pink nipples. Or how a slave's excellent character, splendid appearance, and full breasts have influenced the *special* milk she produces.
(Alisha's thoughts on this are hard to put into words.)
Speaking of which, said the stout woman, the slave trader. I have a slave who's quite striking in a *special* way, and her milk—nothing like I've ever experienced. Her women's butter has a noble, *especially* fine aroma. Try it! The slave trader

64 Correct. The technical term is "steatopygia."

rummaged in her supplies, pulled out a small pot, and pushed it toward Alisha and Tim.
Tim didn't hesitate, took a roll, and generously spread the offered women's butter on it with a knife before taking a bite.
Really not bad! he commented.
Not bad? The stout slave trader clapped her hands over her head in horror. You philistine! Do you know what this tiny pot of women's butter fetches at the market?
The "expensive" argument convinced Alisha to try it too. She took a tiny bit of the snow-white, delicately melting women's butter, spread it on a roll, and bit into it. Hm! The butter had a genuinely pleasant, fine aroma. Alisha took more and tasted again. The butter was really good! That much she could tell. But anything beyond that was probably for connoisseurs to judge.
How do you get such a flavor? Alisha asked as generally as possible.
Some things you can't change, the stout slave trader answered. Either your milk has that exquisitely fine taste, or it doesn't. It's tied to your own body scent, your whole person. And that's why people will always have preferences for this or that. But you can also alter the taste depending on what you eat. And as they say: *Sour woman, sour breast.* You can barely milk a bad-tempered woman, and her milk's worth nothing.
Finally, the stout slave trader mentioned that two or three hours ago, she'd encountered a group of men who were very odd.
Why odd? Tim asked the woman.
Well, said the stout slave trader, they were completely without women. Honestly, what sensible man travels without a woman?
The stout slave trader shook her head disapprovingly. Such recklessness, she scolded.
With that, the topics of conversation were exhausted, and they said their goodbyes. Alisha and Tim stood up, but the stout slave trader, still with her pony at her side (her milk must flow slowly), remained seated.
And you really won't do my pony a little favor? the stout slave trader tried one last time with Alisha.
Alisha, already on her feet, consoled her, maybe next time.
Then I'll have to take matters into my own hands again, the woman waved off.
It probably wasn't that bad, and Alisha would've just been an extra treat for her pony. As Alisha and Tim turned to leave, the stout slave trader, without much hesitation, kissed her pony's neck, and her hand slipped between his loins.
There you go, Tim whispered to Alisha.
And you, Alisha asked loudly with a sharp tongue, wouldn't that be something for you, pulling me around in a fancy pony cart?
Just asking again is a sure way to get a spanking, Tim growled.

But the pony looked very content, Alisha teased, egged on.
Zack! Tim had her bent over his arm, skirt pushed aside, and Alisha got three flat-handed smacks on the bottom. Ones that stung afterward.
Oooooh, Alisha writhed, rubbing her bottom as she stood on her own feet again. Those weren't half-bad.
Want more?
Oh no, Alisha laughed, giving him a kiss on the mouth, I can definitely wait the four or five thousand years for my arse to get bigger.
Both laughed, and on they went along the azure paved path.



Special Researchers

Alisha and Tim had been wandering along the azure paved path for perhaps two or three hours—that is, minus a half-hour for a drinking break (for him) and a quick hand relaxation (for her)—when Alisha suddenly stopped dead in her tracks.
I'm having a vision! she whispered.
In that same moment, Tim yanked her into the bushes. He clapped his hand over her mouth, stifling Alisha's startled cry.
Be completely quiet, Tim whispered. There's real danger!
Alisha's heart pounded. Tim pressed her head and bottom to the ground. Get flat and make no sound, he whispered, head down, bottom down, not the slightest movement! Quickly but quietly, he tossed loose leaves and twigs over Alisha, then flattened himself to the ground and hurriedly camouflaged himself.
A group of men approached them on the azure paved path. Breathlessly, Alisha watched as they passed by. There was probably little real danger, as the men were very distracted, laughing loudly and clearly having plenty to talk about. Alisha counted seven men.
And the men were truly strange. They all had the same boring short haircut. Greasy hair, Alisha commented inwardly. And they all wore suits, dress shirts, and ties. Tasteless suits, tasteless shirts, and tasteless ties. And those shoes!
Heavens, they remind me of home! Alisha whispered excitedly once the men had passed. Except for the bib on their trousers, that's different.
They *are* from home, damn it, Tim muttered quietly.
How can that be? Alisha whispered back.
Very simple, Tim said. They came through the transition in the GDR, the one the Stasi monitors. Like I did at first, remember?
Yes, of course!
Our job was to escort spies and so-called special researchers from the Party to the transition. But we were never allowed to accompany them into Peridëis, and we

never found out what exactly they were after here.
These are those special researchers? And now you want to know?
Yes! This is a one-time chance. The danger for you is low, even if they see your face. They wouldn't connect it to the GDR. But they mustn't see me. What's the best move...
Come on, that's obvious, Alisha interjected. What ties you to the GDR is your bailiff uniform, whether all bailiff wear it or not.
They all do, Tim replied.
Still, Alisha said. It's reminiscent of the GDR and would trigger the right associations in their minds. Just take off the uniform—as a naked man, they definitely won't link you to the Stasi back home.
Tim's eyes lit up. That makes the risk acceptably low, he decided, and hurriedly stripped.
Alisha and Tim stepped back onto the path, and Tim found a distinctive spot to hide the uniform. Once that was done, they followed the special researchers at a safe distance.
Their destination can't be far from here, Tim reasoned aloud.
Because they're without women?
Exactly, yes.

The special researchers made noise like a school class, so tracking them was hardly difficult, and there was no need to get close enough to see them.
They're covering something up, Alisha remarked.
Why?
Don't you notice how loud they are? So artificially hyped up? Nonstop loud, silly chatter. That's usually to mask something, like a feeling they don't want others to notice.
Hm. What do you do when, like here in Peridëis, you have the chance to fulfill your deepest desires but don't dare because you feel watched? Something like that?
Maybe! That could be the key, Alisha said.
Stop! Tim called suddenly, half-aloud, grabbing Alisha.
What is it?
They've stopped.
Alisha and Tim halted and listened. Indeed. The special researchers were apparently taking a break.
Stay here, Tim said. I'll check what's going on. Make yourself comfortable. If it takes longer, there'll be something interesting to see or overhear, so don't worry.
Tim slipped away.

An hour later, Tim was back with Alisha, his face smeared with dirt and his body

equally black. Piglet! Alisha laughed. She held out a surprise: a flask of milk. My own production, she announced. It was about time I managed it myself. It wasn't easy, so please don't just chug it down carelessly.
Too late, Tim replied, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, leaving a clean streak across his dirty face. But, he continued, it was a delight to chug it down carelessly instead of having to coax it out of you. It tastes great cooled, by the way. You should do this more often, even if the milk loses much of its potency in the air. It's still a true delicacy. What inspired this culinary experiment?
Oh, boredom, Alisha said. And the fact that you'll tell me quicker what those guys are up to now, instead of stringing me along because you want your portion from me first.
Tim laughed. Then I won't keep you in suspense. So, those guys are indeed special researchers. There are only a few of them, and I know two of them. Big shots from Berlin who'd visit us regularly. From the looks of it, you can hardly call it research—it's a mix of Party bureaucrats and other folks who've clawed their way to high ranks. There's even a Stasi officer among them. They see themselves more as a kind of elite club. They all call each other "comrade" and spout every known slogan, but it's more like a religious sect that's lost all touch with reality. I didn't learn much, unfortunately, only that a few hundred meters from here, a side valley branches off to the left, where their destination is. It must be a house, a castle, or something like that. These special researchers aren't suspicious at all, but I can't follow them inside. In a building, I'd have to show myself...
Do you think I could do it? Alisha asked curiously.
In principle, yes, Tim mused aloud, so as I said, I see no danger. Do you think you're up for it?
How did you just do it? Alisha asked back.
That's right up my alley, Tim grinned mischievously. Just dive in and then crawl on all fours, that's all it was.
At least you rolled in the dirt first.
Tim laughed: You don't have to do that. And—no, it really wasn't a problem, they were so loud and careless. Want to come to the stream?
Why? Alisha asked.
To wash up.
Me wash you?
No, I can manage that myself. Just come along, I meant. Where's your mind?
On the last time I cleaned my pearl.
How many times?
Three.
In an hour? Plus milking?
It was very urgent. Alisha laughed. Come on, she said, I'll come with you.
Sadly, Tim didn't let Alisha wash him, as she'd secretly hoped. It probably

would've gotten him worked up unnecessarily. But Alisha didn't hold it against him. The poor guy had it tough enough already.
Once Tim was clean and Alisha at least got the chance to thoroughly admire his toned body, they shared a meal by the stream's edge. They discussed what to do. The most sensible plan seemed to be keeping a safe distance as before, with the idea that Peridëis would align more with the special researchers' desires this way. Only at their destination would they close in.
So they followed the special researchers when they noticed them moving on. Tim still completely naked, Alisha as she was. In her dress, she wouldn't stand out in Peridëis.
The special researchers had turned into a narrow side valley. After Alisha and Tim followed them for a kilometer or two through several twists of the valley, they stopped, stunned, after another bend. In the middle of the valley, the path widened into a circular plaza, perhaps twenty meters in diameter. At its center stood a large bronze sculpture, maybe five meters tall, if not more. It depicted a woman offering her breasts to the viewer. But this wasn't the highly stylized version often found in Peridëis. Nor was it remotely realistic. It had typically feminine curves, but they were roughly crafted, distorted, muscular. Perhaps like a woman after ten years of hard labor at a blast furnace, yet even then, the model would likely have been ashamed of her likeness, as her exaggeratedly lascivious pose, paired with the imagined furnace, felt embarrassing. The breasts seemed made of muscle strands rather than milk glands, and her gaze was odd. It was meant to express sexual ecstasy but made the viewer think of a mix between "there's lemons over there" and a strained bathroom visit. The bronze woman lacked any eroticism.
What does this unbelievably ugly bronze woman remind me of? Tim asked.
Alisha doubled over with laughter: Socialist realism! We had that drilled into us in school until we couldn't take it anymore.
Oh, heck, now I get it, Tim said. "Better shaped by life than painted by Sitte[65]."
Tim was still stunned and couldn't laugh. No way, he commented. Something like this? In Peridëis? Now it's getting even more interesting. I want to know what they're offered and what they do. I can't even begin to imagine.
Me neither, Alisha replied, wiping a tear from her eye. Me neither. This sight kills everything. The heroic is ruined by the erotic, and the erotic by the heroic. It's just pointlessly mashed together, like masturbating to political slogans.
I always suspected they do that.
Alisha giggled. Let's find out.
They hurried after the comrade special researchers. Not long after, a few hundred meters ahead, they saw a building. Strangely... no, not really... consistently (!) an

65 Willi Sitte: State-sponsored artist in the GDR.

ugly rectangular box that looked like it was made of concrete.
Stop, Tim said quietly, vanishing into the bushes beside Alisha. You'll have to go on alone now, he whispered. I'll wait here. Is that okay with you?
All good, Alisha replied. I'll bravely scout this concrete box to find out what they're up to. I'm personally curious.
I'll make myself comfortable a bit off the path, Tim whispered. Take as much time as you think is sensible.

And Alisha set off toward the concrete box.
Tim found a raised spot off the path where he could watch without being seen and dozed.

Less than an hour later, the familiar racket approached again. Tim lifted his head, surprised. Sure enough, there came all the comrade special researchers, heading back. Just as noisy. Only one thing was different: each carried a shopping bag in their right hand, printed with a large Peridëis symbol.
What had happened? Their voices sounded perfectly normal, as if nothing noteworthy had occurred. Tim worried anyway.
Ah! There he saw Alisha coming out of the building. It had to be her, as what other woman would follow.
Tim let the special researchers pass, waited a moment longer, and then ran to meet Alisha.
Was it Alisha?
Yes, it was her.
So? How was it in there? Tim asked, a bit out of breath from jogging toward Alisha.
Alisha rolled her eyes. Horrific! she said. Horrifically disappointing. Let's get out of here. This place is thoroughly rotten.
They set off together. Not too fast, as the seven special researchers were ahead in the narrow valley, heading home. They had to be a bit cautious.
Alisha took a breath. So, she said. I should've laughed at such patheticness, but it left me cold. I can only hope that each of them, taken individually, is a person somewhere with their own tastes, feelings, and desires. But what's the common ground of seven yes-men who only echo each other's opinions? Can you guess what was in that house?
N...no, Tim stammered.
Alright, Alisha said. You walk in. Nothing special inside, just tidy. Really boring. A door on the left, a door on the right, which do you want to hear about first?
Uh, left, Tim decided.
OK, Alisha said, but that's the door they went through later.
Then the right door first, Tim laughed.

Brace yourself, Alisha said. A modern glass door with a gold-shimmering aluminum frame.
Already dreadful.
Exactly. But here's the kicker. A sign.
A sign?
Guess what it said.
Tough one, since no one in Peridëis can read.
Not true. Visitors can.
Alright, fine. So what did it say?
Hold on tight: "Please wait, you will be seated!"
No!
Yes!
Like in those stuffy restaurants in the provinces? Where you stand like an idiot at the door for half an hour, watching the waiters leisurely smoke one cigarette after another instead of working?
Exactly like that. Except behind it, seven hookers sat, leisurely smoking one cigarette after another instead of working. And our esteemed special researchers stood there obediently, waiting to be called.
Tim doubled over laughing. And all this fuss for that? For *that*??? Oh, if only I could tell someone! And did they at least get to the ladies afterward?
They did, Alisha said. But first, each had to wait obediently on their bed for an extra bit of time. Meanwhile, there was a cultural program.
Aaaaah. Tim grimaced as if he had a toothache.
Oh, yeah. There was a little stage with a performance by... let's say... the factory erotica group of the VEB[66] Underwear Ottendorf-Okrilla. That kind of thing. And they showcased women's lingerie. Like snappy, cute bra cups from Nizhny Novgorod for deserving Friendship Pioneer leaders[67]. All accompanied by Erzgebirge folk music.
Oh, cruel, but now you're exaggerating. Right?
Only a little, but it was exactly that kind of aesthetic! At least the working girls, when they finally showed up, put in some effort, as far as I could tell. I was standing behind the glass door, so I can judge it theoretically. By the way, they were all pretty dolls, except...
Except? I sense something awful.
...except they all had horrific perm hairstyles, that mom look, provincial makeup on their pretty faces, and really tacky hooker purses over their shoulders. Not to mention the clothes they wore before starting work, for which *I* would've

66 VEB: People's Owned Enterprise (german: Volkseigener Betrieb), the standard business form in the GDR. There were also PGH – (german: Produktionsgenossenschaft des Handwerks) Craft Production Cooperatives, small private enterprises, etc.

67 A full-time FDJ (Free German Youth) functionary in GDR schools.

personally chased each of those tramps out of the disco back home with a whip. And they all let themselves be bought a cherry whiskey.
Tim couldn't stop laughing, dangerously close to a stomach cramp. Does it go on? he gasped.
Oh, it goes on, Alisha said. They thought I was a hooker too, but luckily for me, the comrade special researchers were already satisfied by then, and the house staff had better natural assets than me. You can't hide that, despite all the uglifying measures. But it was the first time in my life I was happy about better-endowed competition, because despite Peridëis's intense hormonal surges, my pussy was bone dry.
Tim howled. Go on, go on, he panted.
Oh, yeah, Alisha said, I didn't want to spoil the punchline. The girls got paid, and guess with what?
No!
Well, at the entrance, there was this smug jerk, and he handed everyone a wad of cash against a receipt. Including me. Western money!
Tim groaned.
That's how they paid their little mice. But there was still money left.
Let me guess, the left door?
Exactly! The left door. Know what the sign on it said?
Don't torture me, or I'll die.
It said "INTERSHOP"[68].
Meow! Tim let out.
Yup, all in, all out, you must've seen the shopping bags. They even bought breastmilk there, though they could've gotten it fresh from the hookers. I got you a pack of gum, by the way. Want some?
I'd feel dirty inside if I ate it now, Tim replied.
Me too, Alisha said, and angrily tossed the gum into the bushes. She flung the wad of Western money after it.
Litterbug!
At least I feel better now, Alisha commented on her actions. How can people be so pathetic?! Peridëis has so much to offer!
Could have so much to offer, Tim qualified.
Subjunctive mood, Alisha added.
That's the problem with all these political fanatics, Tim elaborated on Alisha's addition. Can becomes could. Subjunctive promises. What's so beautiful in theory

68 Intershops were state-run stores in the GDR where coveted Western goods could be bought, but only with foreign currency ("West money"), which GDR citizens theoretically couldn't access. It was actually quite a stupid idea to present people in such shops what they couldn't get in the GDR. But the Intershops brought the state a lot of Western foreign currency and the developed socialist individual was naturally above such banal desires.

turns into a mere fantasy for them. If the fantasy became reality, they and their entire cause would be obsolete.
But they didn't even have a fantasy, Alisha countered.
They probably did once, but they lost it along the way.
That must be it, Alisha agreed. Not an unimportant lesson, I think.
And I felt guilty for putting you through this. Our journey through Peridëis is supposed to be all about you, and I'm meant to set everything else aside.
No, Alisha said, this was a really interesting experience. I looked into the dreams of these bigwigs fighting for a just world. And there was nothing. Knowing that is valuable.
For me too, Tim said. You know how I deal with those types on duty back home?
Tell me!
The idea came from one particularly special superior, name's Prillwitz. An aaaaaa..., let me tell you.
Arsehole?
You said it. So, I kept contradicting him and got into real trouble over and over. Then came the saving idea: when guys like that get on your nerves, you have to picture them in a really embarrassing situation. It has to be *really* embarrassing. Suddenly, you can handle it.
And what did you picture?
Him in uniform, in the middle of Berlin, directing traffic at a busy intersection with his penis exposed and a raging hard-on. That did it. I found him tolerable all of a sudden.
Alisha laughed. And now you're wearing a uniform like that and always have a hard-on.
At least I don't have to direct traffic.
Doesn't it ever embarrass you? The exposed penis thing?
Are your exposed breasts embarrassing? No. It doesn't embarrass me. Not at all. Not here in Peridëis. The problem is more that an erection usually signals to women that a man is ready. And that has a function here. Like a woman's pussy when she bends over and it's swollen. But when a woman sees my physical readiness... here, they don't separate instinct from reason. I have to keep making it clear that, despite being aroused, I'm off-limits.
What do you do in those cases? Alisha asked.
If the woman's very aroused, I offer to help her with self-pleasure if necessary, or in the worst case, I have to overpower her.
And then?
Either I do it for her with my hand, or she gets the whip.
Seriously, the whip?
Bailiffs are untouchable. That's a well-known law. Women know exactly what they're trying when they jump me, assuming they can still think clearly. I didn't

fully realize before that the whip, used in a certain way, can also directly trigger a sexual release... though, honestly, I should've known.
Alisha swallowed. I might not even be able to resist that effect. Not if I'm already aroused, which is basically the default state here. I never would've believed it before, it's so strange... Could that have played a role with the flagellants in the Middle Ages?
Definitely.
Cover!
Tim yanked Alisha into the bushes, but this time it was a dense thicket, and lying flat was enough.
Just in time, as another group of men came around the bend toward them.
Who the hell are these now? Tim hissed.
They're not the special researchers, Alisha whispered back, they look more like monks.
And indeed. The group of just over ten men, approaching briskly, resembled monks. Each wore a sort of loose sackcloth garment. The impression that they were just burlap sacks was heightened by how skimpy they were. Pubis and buttocks were barely covered, and their legs were completely exposed. The monks were chanting a verse together, with the lead monk intoning melodically and the others repeating after him. The lead monk rhythmically swung a vessel hanging from three delicate chains. But it wasn't incense; nothing rose from the vessel.
Like the special researchers, the monks had a uniform haircut, though shorter.
What were they chanting?
Now it was audible:

"Blessed are you among women,
and blessed are the fruits of your body."

What? Alisha whispered.
What's that? Tim whispered back.
The prayer's wrong, Alisha whispered. It should say: "blessed *is* the fruit of your body." This way, it sounds like they're talking about tits.
Tim buried his face in the ground, laughing silently into the dirt.
It took a moment for him to speak again.
But it didn't matter; they had to wait for the monks to pass anyway.
Alisha continued, did you see the vessel that the leading monk was swinging?
No, I was busy laughing.
It was shaped like a sagging breast. I only know that from Saint Agatha, who had her breasts cut off. In Sicily. And at festivals in her honor, they make breast-shaped rolls with nipples. They're actually called "Virgin's Breasts" there. Breast-shaped vessel exist too.
You think these are real church representatives? Tim asked.
Oh, Alisha replied, no church is safe from people who overdo it.

Is that so? Tim growled. If we apply that defense to the comrade special researchers, what would your conclusion be?
Oh, heck.
That's what I mean, Tim said. Special theologians. If we're judging, we have to use the same rules for everyone.
But you have to admit...
Oh, really?
Fine, I'll shut up, Alisha grumbled. You're probably right, though. Still, a holy virgin revered erotically is way more pleasant than that heroic laborer heroine back there as a statue.
Why?
The holy virgin is prettier, she has eroticism, you can enjoy her.
And what are people supposed to say who have to worship her with empty stomachs? Beyond eroticism and beauty, fighting hunger is, after all, a goal of the communists.
The church's too. But aside from that: I want both, justice *and* beauty, Alisha said defiantly. If someone ties me up and shoves gruel in my mouth every day, I'd be full, but I still wouldn't want to live like that.
Fair enough, that's true. So a middle ground?
No, everything. Sustenance and humanity and freedom and beauty and eroticism. All of it. People change with the circumstances they live in. If the path to paradise is muddy and deceitful, a bunch of filthy liars will arrive and ruin and deny it. Would that still be paradise?
Alright, Tim growled after some thought. Holiness probably isn't a state but an action.
I'll remember that one, Alisha replied.
Still, I'd love to know... Tim hesitated.
What? Alisha asked.
I'd love to know what the monks are doing now.
Me too, Alisha said.
Want to follow them again?
Could I?
Why not? No one's rushing us.
So Alisha and Tim slowly trailed the monks until they reached the spot where they'd parted before.
Should I come along this time? Tim asked. None of the monks could know me.
Alisha thought for a moment. No, she finally said, unless your curiosity is eating you alive. But you know, the situation is most like before if I go alone now. If you're there, things might unfold differently, right?
Right.
That's why! Alisha continued. I'm not just curious about the monks themselves

but what's different now. And that's most interesting if everything stays as similar as possible.
You're right, Tim replied. I'll gladly wait here. Now hurry so you don't miss anything.

It took a bit longer for the monks to return, and Alisha after them. Since no special caution was needed anymore, Tim went straight back to the path after the monks passed him on their way back. All the monks now carried large clay jugs, likely filled with milk powder or women's butter. Their burlap robes were hitched up, exposing penis and buttocks. Each monk had a strong erection, a rapt, absent expression, and their chants sounded much more robust.
What had happened? The monks could hardly have slept with the women in the house, or they wouldn't have such strong erections. All of them!
But there came Alisha, who could surely provide answers.
So? How was it this time? Tim asked curiously.
Alisha looked thoughtful. It was strange, she said. The house was completely different. Still the same box, but now it looked more like it was made of clay, not concrete. And instead of dull, it felt simple. In the sense that it suddenly had something, an aesthetic through omission, sparseness as a spark for the imagination...
?!?!
Yes, really. Similar yet totally different. The monks had to wait humbly too, but this time the humility had a... a... meaningful purpose. The monks were silent, each somehow lost in themselves, and the... the... no, they weren't hookers... these women wore clothes like nuns. Hair tucked away, clothing all nun-like, only their faces, hands, and of course breasts were exposed. The nuns chatted this time too while the monks waited, but it felt different, it didn't have that certain deliberate callousness.
And then?
When the monks were called in, it had something ceremonial. It was a real ceremony. The monks went to their knees right past the entrance, standing side by side, and the nuns lined up at the far end of the room. Both groups far apart, and the room was completely bare this time. White walls, red brick floor, nothing else. The room, probably because of its emptiness, had a strange acoustic resonance. The nuns started a polyphonic song, and it sounded like an angelic choir, honestly. That alone was a dream, but when the men's voices of the monks joined in, I cried, it was so moving.
Tim stayed silent. Whether out of awe or respect for Alisha wasn't clear.
Really, Alisha continued. It went on for a while, and the monks and nuns barely sang full sentences, more like intoning words, surrendering to the sounds of those words in various ways. It was more about the resonance of the syllables.

You're not going to tell me what they sang?
Caught me, Alisha replied. Of course, there was a theme. At least hinted at. It was like the worship of a female deity, but never in a way I fully grasped; I'm just piecing it together with my own guesses. It was a very physical worship, especially of the breasts, what flows from them, but also the womb, the feminine as the object of desire. It reminded me a bit of certain forms of Marian devotion, but I'm sure it exists or existed in other religions too.
And then?
When the singing ended, the monks stood and slowly walked to the nuns. Each monk knelt before one of the nuns, and she offered him her breasts with both hands. Exactly like that image you see everywhere in Peridëis. And then all the monks drank. It... it... had something very ecstatic. For the nuns too. It wasn't ascetic or contemplative anymore, but rather very animalistic, almost frenzied. For both, monks and nuns. With some nuns, milk even sprayed from the free breast.
No wonder, our special researchers left the women high and dry with their milk, Tim commented.
True. But still. It seemed to come more from the situation itself. Well, and after quite a while, that arrogant guy at the door...
He was there too?
Yes... so after quite a while, the arrogant guy at the door suddenly clapped his hands, and it was over. The nuns pulled their breasts away, the monks stood, and they filed out.
Was there the other room this time too?
Yes. But this time, it was just a sort of souvenir shop.
A devotional goods store?
If you want to call it that, yes. There were small jugs in every shape with women's butter and milk powder, which the nuns must have collected, and there were also jewelry or keepsakes of the woman holding her breasts. In every imaginable form and variation—as drawings, wooden sculptures, clay reliefs, pendants, rings, stones, and who knows what else. I got you something. You're not getting the nuns' milk, you take mine, but I brought you a necklace with a pendant. Alisha showed it to Tim. It was a simple thin leather cord with a copper sheet figure of the familiar woman offering her breasts to the viewer, her legs shaped into an oversized O.
Will you wear it for me? Alisha asked Tim.
What, you want me to...?
Please, please!
Only because you gave it to me.
Thank you! Alisha beamed.
Tim put the necklace around his neck. Say, he finally asked, your tone is very

different from before?
What do you mean?
Earlier, with the special researchers, you were mocking. Now you sound completely different. Could it be you're biased?
Yes, Alisha admitted. Maybe I am. But you know, the monks seem somehow more honest. Sure, what they believe and do might be strange, but at least they seem to live their faith fully—it doesn't feel hypocritical, it actually feels very sincere. I felt a bit ashamed for secretly watching.
Was it sexual?
In a way, yes, that ecstasy. At least like a trance. But the penis wasn't involved at all, nor were the women's wombs. Though all the monks had erections and it smelled strongly of arousal, but that's understandable.
Oh?
Yes.
Alright.
Alisha and Tim walked back along the path. After a few hundred meters, they reached the circular plaza again.
Both paused.
In the middle of the plaza still stood a sculpture. Unmistakably the same woman in the same pose, hands holding her breasts out to the viewer. The stance was the same too. But the woman was entirely different; everything about her was sensual eroticism, her gaze like that of a woman at climax, if her eyes are open then. If. And her body expressed a turning toward the viewer, very femininely shaped and breathtakingly beautiful.
Alisha and Tim stared at the statue, transfixed.
How beautiful! Alisha whispered.
Yes, Tim said curtly, no less impressed. But then he couldn't resist a remark: In certain medieval saint stories, the Virgin Mary appeared to famous monks in rather questionable poses.
You're disgusting! Do you have to ruin it? This sculpture is *so* beautiful!
It is, Tim apologized, I just couldn't keep my tongue in check.
Alisha looked at Tim skeptically.
Honestly, Tim said. It's not just beautiful, it has something more to it. Really.
Good thing the monks didn't see it.
The monks...
They stood in a row before the female sculpture, about two meters apart from each other. Behind each monk was his jug, placed on the ground. All the monks looked up at the female sculpture, but their gazes had something rigid, utterly absent. And they emitted a uniform sound, like a prolonged "O," but it was a tone that leaned slightly toward an "A." Somewhere between A and O, a bit closer to O. The tone was steady, but if you listened closely, you noticed the monks were

breathing in a choral pattern, each at a different point, so the blend of all their voices maintained a constant harmony.
Tim carefully pulled Alisha into the bushes, where they both lay down and watched. From their thicket, they had a side view of the row of monks.
Tim whispered: The sculpture has traits of the Virgin Mary, but it reminds me more of much older statues.
Quiet! Alisha cut him off.
It was noticeable that one monk's tone changed, sounding more strained, and it was clear he was breathing faster. It took Alisha a few moments to figure out which monk it was. She didn't have to wonder long why he was breathing faster, as his face suddenly contorted in utmost bliss, his body hunched slightly, and Alisha saw that seed was apparently spurting from his erect penis.
He didn't even touch himself, Alisha whispered excitedly, the seed just came on its own!
Are the others trying that too? Tim asked quietly.
Looks like it, Alisha replied, let's wait and see.
And there! Not long after, heavy breathing was heard again. Unfortunately, Alisha only identified the monk by the spurting seed. She would've liked to see his face beforehand. But this monk's climax lasted a long time. Alisha noticed that the two monks had now dropped out of the chant and were silent. Only the others continued their "O," leaning slightly toward "A." Then it happened in quick succession; one monk after another spilled his seed, and it fell into the dust.
Why are the monks wasting their seed? Tim asked quietly. That's very unusual in Peridëis, considering how valuable sperm is to the man.
Alisha mused aloud: Could it be some kind of sacrificial cult?
Looks like it.
One monk remained. His "O" now sounded tremulous, and sweat dripped down his face.
He's not going to make it, Tim whispered.
Now one of the monks grabbed the remaining monk's arm. He lowered his head and gave up. Alisha saw tears streaming down his face.
Before Tim could stop her, Alisha stepped out of the bushes and approached the monks. She walked very slowly. Tim stayed in the thicket, watching intently to see what she would do.
Alisha simply pulled the monk's face to her breast and used her free hand to help guide the milk into his mouth.
Was Alisha aware of the overpowering effect of her own milk? Tim wondered. But would that alone be enough? True, the monk probably lived in celibacy, but still. He himself lived in celibacy too. Though... he wasn't trying to work himself into an aroused state, he even avoided it. But if he did... he'd probably come without touching himself too. The circumstances were just different.

A few minutes later, Alisha pulled her breast from the monk's mouth. She brought him to an upright position and stood behind him. With her hands, she gently turned the monk's head so he was looking at the beautiful female sculpture again. Alisha's hands stayed on his face.
At the same time, she seemed to whisper something to him.
The monk began intoning his "O" again, leaning slightly toward "A." Alisha continued holding his head, her hands half-cupping his face. And she kept whispering something in his ear.
It happened quickly. The monk's "O" was broken by rapid breathing, his face became rapturous, and finally, he spilled his seed. Alisha slipped away before the monk had recovered.
Let's get out of here, Alisha laughed at Tim, and they both dashed through the bushes away from the monks.
What was the trick? Tim asked.
I dazed him with perfume fresh from my lap. I held it right under his nose. As hot as I am, that probably would've been enough to drive an entire monastery into a frenzy.
And what did you tell him?
Nothing special. Just that he was about to come. Over and over.
No wonder, Tim said. Good whores probably know tons of tricks like that.
Oh, thanks, Alisha laughed. A good housewife should know them too, even if just to fall asleep quickly.
They both laughed.
What else do you know about such sculptures and their worship? Alisha asked. You were about to say something earlier.
I don't know much, Tim said. Just that the Virgin Mary is sometimes revered very sensually. Even the milk thing is well-documented. The real models are probably older cults, whether Astarte, Ishtar, or Asherah.
Really with milk?
With milk. But not everywhere. You only find traces, hints, remnants. But from the Far East through India to Bronze Age Mesopotamia, Egypt, Cyprus, and Crete, you find depictions of goddesses or fairies offering their breasts for drinking. With a man actually drinking, though, I only know that from kings, pharaohs, or at least famous heroes.
Since when do regular people get monuments? Alisha interjected.
Fair point, Tim agreed. But anyway, such depictions were often destroyed later or hidden. In Berlin, I saw some of those ancient depictions in a museum. But they were just very small sculptures.
I'd love to see those, Alisha said. Where was that?
Such small sculptures are said to be on display in many large museums around the world; I myself have seen them in the Neues Museum in Berlin.

In Berlin? - I'll check it out! Say, do you think the monks deliberately held back their ejaculation with the nuns?
That's probably the point, I'd guess, Tim replied. I mean, they're aiming for something entirely different than I am, somehow redirecting their sexuality. Maybe that's exactly the purpose of religious celibacy.
Catholic monks have to live chastely, while Catholic priests are only required to remain unmarried.
Really?
Yes. I'd be curious about how it was in the Middle Ages. Imagine you grow up in a monastery, never see the opposite sex, and no one tells you more than abstract things about it. You're completely innocent. Wouldn't your emerging sexuality just find another path?
I read something about that in a book, Tim said. We have a pretty good library; it's a shame hardly anyone but me actually digs through it. It's not just in religion, but in everyday life and art too. It's not that rare for sexual impulses to find another outlet. But you don't always have to think in complicated ways; there's also very direct sexual play. In some cases, one partner stays deliberately unsatisfied while the other can do anything, including sexual acts with others right in front of them. It's supposedly about humiliation, but also about putting the chaste partner into a kind of submissive state. But it only works if the chaste partner willingly participates.
And someone does that voluntarily?
Would you deny that someone voluntarily enters a monastery?
That's different!
The greatest of all perversions is voluntary sexual abstinence.
Only if you nicely translate "per vers" as "for version."

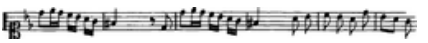
Fine by me. And besides, there are people who find renunciation and service pleasurable, not just spanks during sex.
But like these monks?
It doesn't always have to be pain. Renunciation itself and a thousand other variations work just as well.
But the monks' renunciation serves a purpose!
Oh, really? And what's that?
Ouch. Well... well... well... the monks believe their renunciation achieves something! That's selfless! Not for the sake of pleasure!
Suppose they do it with a selfless motive, wouldn't the pleasure that comes anyway be a great motivation to keep going?
Now you're putting the cart before the horse.
No, take another field: doctors and psychologists know the term "illness gain." Someone might unconsciously stay in a sick state because their illness brings, say, attention they didn't have before. Care, sympathy, maybe even money, like a pension, or simply not having to work. That can, at least in part, keep them from getting better, even if they suffer greatly from their condition.
Hm. And for such a small gain, monks would endure celibacy?
Why not? You feel pure, participate in the highest aspects of existence, believe you're better than others, maybe even think you're saving the world. And then, in seclusion, renouncing every strong stimulus, in the daily monotony of prayer, you suddenly experience wonderful states. You see them as coming from your God, as the ultimate care, a reward, rapture...
Alright, Alisha replied, maybe for a woman, though there'd probably be plenty of telltale moisture involved. But a man can hardly deny that his most private part just vigorously emptied itself?
I don't know either, Tim admitted. With these monks here, the ejaculation seemed intentional. Maybe it was a kind of offering. But in the mundane world... maybe it's really repressed. Or just kept quiet. Like, only you experience it, but since no one else mentions it, you must be the exception.
The power of silence, Alisha confirmed. But you know what just occurred to me? Men in Peridëis master the technique of suppressing ejaculation while still having a climax. Maybe that exists in the mundane world too.
It definitely does, Tim replied. At least in China, where Taoist beliefs hold that you lose a lot of energy with your seed. Didn't I mention that before? I read about it in a book on sexual therapy, as a warning that it's not a reliable contraception method, but at most has a pleasure-enhancing effect or can be used to meet a woman's higher sexual demands. Honestly!
Alisha laughed.
Tim continued: The technique is known, just not everywhere. But why wouldn't monks accidentally learn it, with the honest intent to suppress an unintended

orgasm? Or they believe it doesn't count then?
That's at least conceivable.
Honestly, I believe monks and nuns redirect their sexuality. Not in a bad way, but they make it serve their religion.
Such words from you!
Why? I've got nothing against religion. I just look for earthly explanations before getting all spiritual.
And what about falling in love?
Hm. You got me there. True, when it comes to that, I don't care about facts.
Alisha giggled and quickly kissed Tim before he could protest.
Well, Tim said, maybe religion is like falling in love. And I don't begrudge them anything, including redirected sexuality. If only they wouldn't badmouth my direct sexuality in return.
That's true, sadly, Alisha replied. Almost every religious leader tries to regulate their followers' sexuality in some way.

The monks are gone, Tim said. Do you think they'll see you as some kind of spirit now?
A saint, if anything, Alisha giggled.
They crawled out of the bushes and brushed off the dirt. Alisha from her dress, Tim from his naked body, and both from their hair.
You know what, Alisha said, in the end, it fits: those special researchers were so cowardly they didn't even take the milk from the full breasts of those pretty hookers. Instead, they stocked up on instant milk at the Intershop with their precious foreign currency. The monks got the benefit of that. Good for them, I don't begrudge it.
They walked on. A little later, they reached the end of the narrow side valley and were back at the azure paved path. A lot of time and different milk supplies separated them from the special researchers—and since those were heading in the same direction, it was unlikely they'd cross paths again. Where the monks had gone didn't matter; it didn't concern them.
You're still naked, Alisha said to Tim. Not that it bothers me...
Hm. Guess I'll go grab my uniform quick, Tim replied. Just start gathering some food, I'll run and be back faster than you think.
No, you won't, Alisha said with a strange look. I'd really like some relaxation, and I'd enjoy it if you sucked a whole lot of sustenance out of me. Come...
Alisha pulled Tim down into the grass with her left hand, guiding him to her breast, while her right hand slipped between her thighs.

When both were done—his sustenance and her relaxation—Alisha finally whispered: Now you can go. Don't get caught.

Definitely not.
And just like that, Tim was gone. Like a panther. Alisha admired him, as she had countless times before.



Comrade slave woman

Alisha and Tim spent the night on a small rocky outcrop in the middle of the valley, easy to climb. This time, their perspective as they fell asleep was entirely different—not beneath the trees, but above them. The treetops spread out below like a grassy carpet, while they had a beautiful view of the colorfully vegetated cliffs lining the valley on either side, and the many birds flying in and out. Above, the sky was open to the sun as it turned into the moon at dusk, and the blue sky that adorned itself with twinkling stars at night. Alisha savored the view while offering Tim his life elixir fresh from her breast, surrendering to the sensations it gifted her.
The next day, they had been hiking for perhaps three or four hours when an infernal stench of decay wafted toward them.
Yuck, what's that? Alisha asked.
Tim went to investigate. Not exactly willingly; Alisha had nudged him forward.
Don't be shocked, Tim said when he returned, I'd say that's our lunch.
Ewww, you're not serious? What is it?
Pinch your nose with your finger and come with me!
Alisha pinched her nose.
They both headed toward the source of the stench. To cut to the chase, it was a Wiener schnitzel tree. Apparently, there were few carnivorous animals in the area, so the ripe schnitzels had fallen and rotted. The ones still on the tree were, of course, not rotten, and Tim picked several.
However: even at a safe distance from the tree (fresh air and all), after a thorough explanation of the circumstances (no lions around, etc.), Alisha refused to eat even a single one of the picked schnitzels.
Smell it and look, Tim said, they're perfectly fine, and held a schnitzel under Alisha's nose.
Yuck, Alisha shuddered.
Fine, your loss, Tim said, and ate about four schnitzels.
Alisha watched him closely.
Only after an estimated hour, when Tim still hadn't died in agony, did Alisha let him hand her a tiny piece. Just to try.
So? Tim asked.
Do you swear they're *completely* fine?

Completely.
But you don't know for sure?
I do.
But you can never be certain.
That's a forbidden trump card.
Hm. Give me a schnitzel.
Then Alisha asked for another. And since you couldn't get fat in Peridëis without explicitly willing it, she ate a third. But then she was full.
They don't seem deadly poisonous, she admitted. You could've handed me some lemon with it.
Tim smirked but said nothing.
They had hiked another half hour or so when they suddenly heard shouts and the crack of whips. What was that? Cautiously, they approached the next bend in the valley. A side valley branched off, and at the entrance to the side valley, a larger group of people was visible.
A slave trader with his wares, Tim said to Alisha.
Maybe the woman we met; shall we go over? Alisha asked.
No, Tim replied. The special researchers are still too close. Let's stay under cover.
It's the first time I've properly seen slaves, Alisha grumbled. Why weren't there any in the town?
We can watch them, Tim answered, but going over would be unwise. And of course, there were slaves in the town; you just didn't notice. You can tell by the tight collar with a metal ring they wear, and they're usually naked. But not always. The collar is the real giveaway.
And indeed, not all the slaves were naked, but all wore a tight collar with a metal ring. And all were connected by a light rope attached to that ring.
Couldn't you just cut such a thin rope? Alisha asked.
You could, Tim replied. The rope only prevents, how should I put it... snap decisions. Don't forget, no one stays a slave forever against their will, and at the annual Creation Festival, they have the choice to stay a slave or leave.
I totally forgot about that. And some really stay slaves voluntarily?
Yes. Some people like not having to make big decisions, and others genuinely want to atone for a debt. Plus, Peridëis residents forget faster than we do from the mundane world.
What do you mean?
Haven't you ever heard people talk about the good old days, when everything was better, the grass greener, and kids weren't so cheeky? People forget bad things faster than good ones, and that's even more pronounced with Peridëis residents. Or think of women who forget the pain of childbirth and soon want to get pregnant again. Here, slave owners make sure the week before the Creation

Festival is really nice. Suddenly, the slaves see their lives in the rosiest colors, while the uncertain future of self-responsibility and maybe loneliness feels dreadful. It's not that different in the mundane world, just less extreme. It probably has to be that way, or there'd be constant revolts and migrations.
A bird in the hand...
Something like that. Maybe it's even necessary in principle to keep society stable.

Alisha and Tim had climbed a rock that gave them a good view of a sort of camp with the slaves and their overseers. They didn't have to be overly cautious, as the group below was loudly preoccupied with themselves.
One slave woman had been tied to a fallen log. Alisha and Tim couldn't tell why. Meanwhile, several male slaves were preparing a meal, while other male slaves milked the female slaves. The overseers sat around chatting, only occasionally tending to the slaves, but by and large, the slaves seemed to know what to do.
Why are the slave women being milked? Why don't the men get the breastmilk? Alisha asked.
The milk of the slave women is the most valuable thing for the slave owner; the male slaves only get as much as necessary. Maybe one of the slave women is deliberately not milked and has to give her breast to the male slaves afterward. Not from a jug, so no milk is wasted.
And how do they make sure the last male slave still gets some? That the first men don't drink it all?
Oh, they make sure of that.
Really?
Yes, really. Peridëis offers such an abundance of everything that envy over everyday necessities is rare. Even if it happens, you wait two hours, and the breast is full again. Besides, no one would let a man truly suffer milk deprivation. No one does that. And no woman could bear to watch it.
Ten minutes later, one of the overseers jumped up and clapped his hands. He was a huge guy, muscular, with a notably large penis hanging in front of his body—or rather, in front of his legs.
From their rock, Alisha and Tim watched as everyone, overseers and slaves, gathered around the bound woman. The overseer shouted something, and the slaves began clapping rhythmically.
What was happening there?
The overseer flipped up the bound woman's skirt. Her bare bottom came into view. His hand slowly glided down her buttocks, lightly brushing the crevice. He moved through the cleft, where her legs began, then down her thighs. Alisha shivered. It was immediately clear what the overseer was doing: he was arousing the bound slave woman. And arousing himself. His notably large penis had risen.
The slaves' rhythmic clapping grew louder. A melodic chant rose, very rhythmic,

very strange. And as a refrain, it kept repeating: “Bum Bum - Bum Bum”
What are they singing? Alisha asked.
“Bum Bum” means to copulate, mate, sleep together, have sex, make love, do it, screw.
What else? Alisha giggled.
Hump, bang, fuck, mount, shag, bonk, screw, ride, ram, poke, nail, do, screw around, more?
Penetrate sounds harsh.
I prefer fuck.
Why fuck, of all things?
It’s not a euphemism, no sugarcoating, it stands directly, no fuss, for one exact thing. And it sounds like vigorous fun.
Hm. True.
And the overseer’s going to fuck the slave woman now?
I’d interpret his standing pointer that way, Tim said. And “Bum Bum” is indeed a common term for it. All the other words are allowed in Peridëis too, but as you hear, down there at our feet, they’re favoring “Bum Bum” right now.
The guy should finally get on with the Bum Bum, Alisha commented. The slave woman’s probably wet enough by now, if I can judge by myself.
As if Alisha had some kind of magic that carried her words below and made them take effect, the overseer indeed (finally) climbed onto the bound slave woman at that very moment, thrusting his huge erect phallus deep into her body, pausing briefly inside before beginning his game with vigorous hip movements.
The gathered slaves clapped and cheered, only to resume their rhythmic clapping and chanting “Bum Bum” a moment later.
Alisha said: From up here, where you’re unseen, you get a lot more out of watching than in the town—or in any situation where you yourself can be seen.
Oh, that fades with time, Tim said. You’ll see. And over time, it’s supposed to get pretty thrilling to let others watch you while...
Fucking?
...while fucking.
But isn’t it more natural to do it secretly?
If it’s constantly demonized, sure, but haven’t you ever noticed that animals don’t have that shame? Unless they’re afraid of being disturbed? I read once that swans sometimes like to do it in the presence of other swans, to establish themselves as a pair and set boundaries. Kind of like getting married publicly and wearing a wedding ring visibly to show: we’re together, and neither of us is on the marriage market anymore. Plus, it’s probably a bit of showing off.
Look at me, I’m getting fucked! And you’re not! Alisha laughed.
Which brings us to the reason for secrecy, Tim added, competition, the question of who gets to pass on their genes. That’s not an issue here.

So they both watched until the overseer with the large penis visibly shuddered at the peak of his pleasure for all to see, and the surrounding slaves' shouts and clapping would've made it clear to even the most naive convent girl that something was different from just seconds before.
The overseer with the large penis pulled his large penis out of the bound slave woman. It was pointing downward again. But it was still large.
Did he spill his seed into the slave woman? Alisha asked curiously. He is an overseer, after all.
I don't think so, Tim said. Most only do that with their own wife or if they have an abundance of milk. But with slave women, the milk is currency, which an overseer isn't allowed to just steal. So he'll hold back his seed during orgasm.

The overseer now leaned down to the face of the bound slave woman and said something to her. Suddenly, she began to scream and struggle.
The overseer leaned down to her again and said something else. Her cries echoed up to Alisha and Tim: No, no, no, no!
Then the overseer with the large penis took the switch in hand, which he had previously carried on a belt at his side.
And he gave the bound slave woman a smack on the bottom with the switch.
The slave woman cried out.
What's wrong with her? Alisha asked. That wasn't even that hard.
I think she just got a fright, Tim speculated.
Now the overseer with the large penis gave the bound slave woman a second strike of about the same strength, then a third, and more. Very rhythmic. This way of striking didn't look angry at all.
A pro, Tim said. He's breaking her in, I'd say. That seems to be the whole point of this.
The two continued watching the scene. The strikes gradually grew stronger but remained rhythmic, sometimes faster, sometimes slower, and gradually shifted to different parts of her body.
The moaning of the whipped slave woman could be heard.
Now the overseer abruptly stopped the whipping. A shout was heard.
A slave stepped forward.
He's got just as huge a penis! Alisha exclaimed.
To cut to the chase: this man also mounted the bound slave woman. By the third man, the slave woman no longer resisted. Alisha suspected she might have passed out when someone stepped forward whom Alisha recognized.
Now it was Alisha who cried out. Tim quickly covered her mouth.
It couldn't be, Alisha thought. But it was. The figure stepping forward was a small, brightly speckled man with a jester's cap and bells, and in the middle, as already known, he too had an enormous thing. And this little man was ugly,

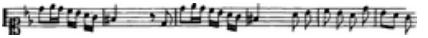
unspeakably ugly.
Alisha had the impression that the little man was smirking up at their hiding spot on the rock, and she quickly pulled her head back.
But she heard a scream from below and quickly looked to see what was happening. The bound slave woman hadn't passed out after all. Instead, she was now screaming her head off, refusing to be taken by the ugly little man. She even managed to twist her upper body partly out of the ropes and turned around. For a brief moment, her face, previously hidden by her hair, was visible. Alisha heard a surprised but thankfully quiet exclamation from Tim beside her, but in the next moment, there was a bang in the valley and a green flash...
...and the ropes that had held the slave woman fell loose, and her skirt and top collapsed in on themselves.
The slave woman herself was gone.
She was a witch! came the cry from below, and everyone started talking excitedly.
She was a witch! the overseer shouted.
But the ugly dwarf with the jester's cap had vanished without a trace as well.
I recognized that woman, Tim said. I'm absolutely sure. She's basically connected to those special researchers. But what happened there?
Didn't you see it?
I only saw vague outlines of someone, nothing clear. And then the escape.
Alisha replied: There's this strange figure that's crossed my path before, back home, then again in the town, and now here. A dwarf with a jester's cap.
He was there just now?
Yes.
Strange, Tim said. I didn't see him. Then it must be directly tied to you. To you and no one else. No, wait, except maybe that woman down there. What happened?
The woman absolutely didn't want to be taken by that dwarf.
Hm, Tim mused. So that woman is definitely linked to the special researchers. But she never went to Peridëis with them, just had some connection to them, whatever it was. Not their superior, though, you'd have noticed that. Our boss isn't fond of her. She once questioned me about the special researchers, but what could I have said? I only ever escorted them to the transition and back. We weren't allowed to go with them. So I couldn't tell her much. But let me tell you, during that talk, all my alarm bells were ringing. She had this predatory air, something feline. A highly intelligent, very beautiful woman. But you got the feeling she was only acting gracious, standing miles above you, knowing everything about you and others, and one wrong word would have her convicting you of treason or who knows what. Honestly, back then, I spilled everything I knew about the special researchers, I was that scared of her. If you ask me: she's

from the ZPKK.
ZPKK?
Central Party Control Commission. Ever heard of them?
No.
The Party's Holy Inquisition. Even feared in the Stasi. She's definitely not from the Stasi disciplinary unit. She's above that, a Party animal, so most likely ZPKK.
But what was she doing here?
Tim scratched his head thoughtfully. Either she had a suspicion and wanted to check on her minions, or that was just her conscious or unconscious pretext to satisfy her own curiosity. The latter seems almost too human for her, though—she came off like a cold data-processing machine that only smiles for professional utility. That doesn't rule out her having a deeply suppressed human side, though. Either way, she seems to have secretly followed her minions.
Alisha countered: She could still have come with the special researchers. Maybe I didn't stand out in that brothel because, without knowing it, I took her place.
Tim thought for a moment. Finally, he said: That's unlikely... I think. It wouldn't be typical for men like that to bring a woman along on brothel trips. At the very least, she's not the type for it. Too uptight. A fun-loving colleague, the tomboyish sort, might've joined in. But this doesn't fit from either angle.
I don't really believe it either, Alisha said. I just didn't want to leave it unsaid. But how could the situation have unfolded as it did, whether she was checking on the men or just curious herself?
It might've caught her off guard, Tim said. That's my personal theory.
What do you mean, caught her off guard? Alisha asked.
Peridëis knows every corner of your soul and seeks out what brings you joy. What truly makes you happy. Your dreams. Your unfulfilled desires. The Stasi vaguely grasped this, which is why we officers aren't allowed into Peridëis, only informants, whom we monitor closely afterward. Because it corrupts, as the Stasi puts it. And it corrupted me too, let's be clear about that.
Do all officers really stick to that?
Like they stick to the Western TV ban.
Uh? What do you mean? Do they really never watch Western TV?
Tim laughed: No. Only *almost* all. With some, you can quietly chat about the Western movie from the night before. Under the table, of course.
And it's the same with Peridëis?
Exactly. Officially, everyone's dutiful and proper, but the general knowledge of certain officers about Peridëis is... surprisingly extensive. Sometimes you even get whispered tips. But those are really just the laid-back types, and even then, only a few. Maybe it didn't hit them as hard because they can still think and feel, instead of rejecting everything that doesn't fit their worldview. This ZPKK comrade, though, seems to have been hit hard.

So you think this woman got caught right at her soft spot?
It sure looks like it! A direct hit to the core in what she thought was safe territory. Maybe she really just meant to tail her comrade special researchers. And here, she experienced something that shook her to her core, reacting like a poor, homely village girl with prospects of marrying the town fool, suddenly given the chance to wed a rich, handsome fairy-tale prince.
But whipping, being a slave, getting raped from behind?!
Dig through your own stash of masturbation fantasies.
Alright, it's all there, but those are pretty idealized fantasies I'd never act out in reality.
Where are we right now?
Ouch. Dreams come true.
Yes. And think about the men. I mean, those penises weren't exactly average, and as men, they weren't either.
But what about that dwarf?
That's the real puzzle. Maybe the nightmare that snaps you awake... The toxic green morality demon that snuck in. He had a huge penis, sure, but everything else was a massive humiliation for the woman. I'd say too much. Either she completely overestimated herself, or it was like thinking about getting fat mid-chocolate binge. Bang. Main fuse blown. Fun over. Out. Crash. And now she's probably at the transition, either heading back to the mundane world or gearing up for another try. Like waking from a derailed dream and either making tea or just using the bathroom before going back to sleep.
I don't think she'll come back, Alisha said. She's probably had enough for now. At least she dared to pursue her own desires, unlike the special researchers.
Don't forget she was alone, Tim countered. It takes nothing to break conventions by yourself—on the contrary, that creates privileges over others. Those special researchers at least admitted to each other they wanted to hit the brothel, even if not a smidgen more, those bourgeois cowards.

Meanwhile, below the rock, the group was hurriedly packing up. The rope that had bound the witch was left behind, along with her skirt and top. No one wanted to touch them. Alisha and Tim went down afterward to take a look. The skirt and top were made of mouse-gray suit fabric, the kind you'd only find in the GDR at an Exquisit store[69] at best. But the top was, of course, breast-free, and the skirt was slit high, and naturally, no panties were left behind.
Where in the GDR do they sell breast-free tops? Alisha asked.
You're missing the point, Tim replied. That woman arrived in Peridëis naked too. She found or got the clothes here.

69 Exquisite stores in the GDR offered high-quality clothing at exorbitant prices, but at least without Western currency.

Alisha slapped her forehead. Of course, she said, you can't bring anything in or out.
Don't complain, Tim teased. Who knows what that's good for—and you can bring your thoughts with you.

Caught!

After the valley had finally emptied, Alisha and Tim treated themselves to a bath in the nearby stream. But as it sometimes happens—the situation seemed jinxed, or they should have remembered the proverb that says, "Birds of a feather flock together" or "Misfortunes never come singly."
While Alisha and Tim were bathing carefree in the stream, they were being watched from the bushes by a man who was even better trained than Tim: It was Captain Prillwitz. He was torn between his sense of duty as an officer to reprimand Tim immediately and a raging desire for Alisha, whose overpowering feminine aura drove him out of his mind. He had never experienced anything like this with a woman before. He had always maintained control, women had always aroused him, but never had they taken away his will. Alisha took away his will. And that insolent, undisciplined guy next to her... what in the name of three devils was he doing here against all regulations? And how had he gotten past him to this place?

Of course, Captain Prillwitz knew Tim, as they served in the same unit, at Facility P. Both were officers of the Ministry for State Security, and it hadn't been long since that guy had been transferred to Facility P as a freshly demoted lieutenant. The fact that he read too many books had immediately made Captain Prillwitz suspicious. And now it was clear to Captain Prillwitz why Tim had been so eager for holiday and weekend shifts. He probably hadn't just been reading books from the library. Captain Prillwitz had been right about his suspicions!

Today, as he had done several times before, Captain Prillwitz had escorted a group of the Party's special researchers through the zone in Facility P. On such occasions, Captain Prillwitz didn't allow himself any personal excursions. For one, it would be too risky, as the special researchers weren't under his command, and you never knew if they'd return at the agreed time. For another, Captain Prillwitz considered it irresponsible, as the work of the special researchers was too significant. Compared to them, everyone at Facility P was just a small fry. This time, however, the situation had been different. Shortly after the special researchers, a comrade from the ZPKK[70] had arrived unannounced and was

70 ZPKK: Central Party Control Commission. Tim's suspicion was correct.

brought to him through the zone by another officer. The other officer had immediately returned. Then the comrade had flashed her ZPKK ID and demanded, under absolute secrecy *toward everyone*, to be taken to the special researchers. Captain Prillwitz had led her to the stone that marked the transition and told her she'd have to continue alone from there. The comrade wasn't his superior and thus had no direct authority to give him orders. Captain Prillwitz could therefore invoke the regulation that forbade him from entering Peridëis. In truth, he was afraid his great secret might be exposed. After a briefing, the ZPKK comrade crossed the transition alone.

But what did the comrade want in the secret land? She had never been there with the special researchers, let alone alone. Did someone suspect something? Or was something important happening there? Captain Prillwitz had to know!

So Captain Prillwitz followed the ZPKK woman. He was cautious. Everything went smoothly. When he reached the altar on the other side, he summoned all his strength to resist the sexual arousal imposed on him and was proud that he almost succeeded. Was the woman nearby? No! Captain Prillwitz crouched and ran outside into the open. He ignored his secret passage into the interior of the rock this time. Once outside, he threw himself flat into the grass. Was there anything to see? No! Where was the woman? Then he suddenly heard a loud moan, not even fifty meters away. The moan was followed by another prolonged one, and a little later, a sharp scream that undoubtedly came from the ZPKK comrade, and then she screamed repeatedly, as if in agony. Now Captain Prillwitz saw her lying naked on her back in the grass, writhing convulsively, curling up in between, her pelvis rhythmically thrusting toward the sky. This was a known, predictable effect of the specific conditions of this environment on the human organism, so Captain Prillwitz didn't think much of it. The woman was here for the first time without operational-tactical training, and he knew exactly what was happening to her. Nothing that would harm her.

Captain Prillwitz slipped under dense bushes and observed the comrade. He envied her a little for being able to surrender so carelessly to what had come over her. As a woman, she was allowed to do that, as often as she wanted. But Captain Prillwitz was impatient. The whole thing was taking time. He forced himself to stay calm and continued watching the woman. She was probably just under 50 years old. Her blonde hair was real and hadn't faded during the transition. She had an almost youthful figure, ultra-slim, her breasts nearly flawless except for minor signs of age. This woman had certainly never given birth; it was a pristine body in top condition, perfect buttocks, perfect hips, only her breasts were rather small. She probably exercised regularly too. A woman had to work hard to achieve such a body; Captain Prillwitz knew the complaints of his own wife, whose two childbirths were all the more noticeable. Not that it bothered Captain Prillwitz—a real woman wasn't a plastic doll, he thought—but he also saw the

difference. However... he thought... this comrade in the grass would surely be interesting for an adventure, but for the bedroom at home... no, he wanted something else. His own wife, despite a few minor flaws, was ultimately a much better choice. If only she didn't... well, no matter, not a topic for now.
Suddenly, Captain Prillwitz noticed a neatly folded suit lying on the ground next to him. It was exactly the kind of suit he always wore in Peridëis. Trousers with no front zipper but a wide bib like traditional leather breeches. A dress shirt, tie, and a cap with a continuous brim. A double strap peeked out from the left side of the suit jacket, where a riding crop could be attached if one wasn't wearing a belt. The riding crop lay next to the folded suit on the ground. Where had the suit come from? No matter. Captain Prillwitz put it on while lying down and attached the riding crop to the double strap. There was surely an explanation for why a uniform had to be lying on the ground here. Some kind of pattern to these events.
Captain Prillwitz glanced over at the woman. She hadn't noticed anything. But she was now coming to her senses. Finally.
Once again, Captain Prillwitz was astonished, as he saw a costume lying in the grass next to the comrade. The costume consisted of a skirt and a top. Had he overlooked it before? That couldn't be clarified now. Captain Prillwitz heard an astonished exclamation. The comrade seemed very pleased with the costume. What now? The comrade was turning the top back and forth. Oh, right, she probably thought a blouse was missing because the breasts were exposed. Yes, that's *how it is* here, Captain Prillwitz grumbled to himself, you *should* know that. But the comrade looked around searchingly. Hurry up! Captain Prillwitz thought desperately, the special researchers are getting away! His patience was tested a bit longer until the comrade was finally dressed and ready to move (Where's the underwear? Captain Prillwitz bit the ground.) and the comrade set off.
But Captain Prillwitz's anger dissipated. In truth, there was only one direction to go here, just one path that began a little below them, and the special researchers could be caught up with after half an hour. Captain Prillwitz, cautiously keeping behind the comrade, breathed a sigh of relief.
The comrade kept her distance from the special researchers instead of joining them. Aha, thought Captain Prillwitz, just as I suspected, something's afoot. You want to monitor them. And Captain Prillwitz noted with approval that the comrade wasn't clumsy in her pursuit of the special researchers. She walked normally on the path but adhered to the basic rules of observation. He'd have to stay on guard with her.
Thus, the ZPKK comrade followed the special researchers, and Comrade Captain Prillwitz followed the ZPKK comrade. The special researchers seemed completely carefree, making noise fit for a barracks courtyard, thought Captain Prillwitz. At one point, they stopped for a picnic. Captain Prillwitz saw the ZPKK comrade climb a small, shrub-covered rock to observe the special researchers

from there. A good idea, as during the picnic, there was a risk that individual researchers might wander off, whether to forage for food or to relieve themselves. Such a situation could easily lead to being spotted. To avoid this, the ZPKK comrade had chosen the rock. A really good idea. And so simple. Captain Prillwitz found another rock, even higher, and climbed it. Now he could observe both parties—the special researchers and the ZPKK comrade.

There! The special researchers ended their break and set off again. Captain Prillwitz was already half-standing. But wait, what was that? The ZPKK comrade had stayed lying on her lower rock, visibly straining to look in a completely different direction. Now she stood up, apparently to see better. She was looking back into the valley, in the direction they had all come from. Did she see something unusual there? Captain Prillwitz couldn't make anything out, probably because a rock was blocking his view. Annoying! This meant there was already a risk of losing sight of the special researchers again. Captain Prillwitz went back into cover. The ZPKK comrade didn't move but kept looking back, ignoring the special researchers.

Then Captain Prillwitz heard distant shouts. Not from the direction of the special researchers. He looked at the ZPKK comrade. Would she decide to quickly leave her rock to follow her special researchers? No. Damn women's curiosity! Captain Prillwitz fumed. It sounded like quite a few people. So, either you disappeared now or stayed pinned to your spot. Why couldn't she just set priorities? There was a clearly defined task, and that was to keep an eye on the special researchers. Everything else was secondary and nothing but a distraction. What to do now? Follow the special researchers alone? In that case, he'd have the not-so-harmless ZPKK comrade at his back. And no one, absolutely no one, could find out that he had ever set foot in this land. That was *his* top priority, and the ZPKK comrade was the second highest. So the decision was clear, and with a groan, Captain Prillwitz slid back to the ground and waited.

The shouts grew closer, and the cracks of whips became audible. Now Captain Prillwitz could see what it was. It was a slave caravan. There was a light, single-axle cart, or rather a pony cart, pulled by a naked slave harnessed with plenty of black leather straps. He even wore blinders and a bit through his mouth, just like a horse, and the harness was topped with two colorful feathers that towered high above his head. In the pony cart sat a well-fed—well, frankly, quite fat—woman, who was apparently the owner of the slave caravan. Everyone else, including the overseers, was on foot. The few pieces of luggage were carried on the backs of male slaves. All the slaves wore a tight-fitting collar with a ring, through which a long leash was threaded, connecting all the slaves, whether men or women. Most slaves were completely naked; some wore clothes, but these usually looked tattered. Apparently, the slaves' clothes weren't taken away directly, but no one bothered to provide new ones when their clothes wore out.

But why didn't the slaves get new clothes themselves? This puzzled Captain Prillwitz, even though he had owned slaves himself, as one had to adapt to local customs in the operational area to avoid standing out. And you had to be economically viable—what good was all the kindness toward unfortunate individual cases if you didn't achieve your goal, which could solve *all* problems? That was strategically smart action! His own slaves hadn't taken the initiative to get new clothes either, so Captain Prillwitz had deemed the matter unimportant. After all, it didn't matter whether a slave walked around naked or not. At best, sealed bras for the female slaves would be useful to prevent their milk from being stolen, but that was unfortunately forbidden.

The overseers used their whips sparingly, and their lashes were accompanied by laughter and jokes, often even lustful moans or corresponding remarks. Captain Prillwitz knew this; it was one of the great peculiarities of this land, along with its intense sexual charge, which caused him so many problems. But how must it be for the ZPKK comrade, experiencing this for the first time?

Captain Prillwitz got an answer sooner than expected. To his horror, the ZPKK comrade left her rock. Powerless to intervene, he watched as she walked to the path and the slave caravan, throwing herself to the ground right in front of the pony cart. What in heaven's name was she doing? The ZPKK comrade was practically offering herself up for enslavement! That was no good tactic, no matter what her plan was, as it completely robbed her of her freedom of action! Or had the ZPKK comrade gone mad?

Captain Prillwitz didn't understand and thought frantically. He concluded that the comrade, due to inexperience, was misjudging the situation. That had to be it. He would have to help her, but the tricky part was that he couldn't endanger himself in the process. He had to follow the slave caravan discreetly and later see if something could be done without the comrade seeing him. So Captain Prillwitz followed the slave caravan, abandoning his desire to find out what the special researchers were doing.

After a thorough inspection, the ZPKK comrade was fitted with a slave collar and tethered to the rope like the other slaves. The caravan owner, a true expert, had detected a particular scent on the new woman, indicating highly valuable milk. Although only a few drops of milk could be extracted from the woman's rather small breasts, the slave trader had excellent staff for such problems. The new slave would soon be moaning from her swelling, bursting breasts and the milk that would soon gush from them. A slave overseer was specifically assigned to look after the newcomer, also to ensure she felt sufficiently attended to. Such seemingly minor details were what distinguished an experienced slave trader.

Captain Prillwitz had observed how the ZPKK comrade was integrated into the slave caravan. He saw that she was trembling like a leaf. He could understand that. What he couldn't understand was the strange smile on her face, which didn't

match her trembling at all. Perhaps she was misjudging her situation. No matter. In any case, following her was now child's play, as she could hardly break away from the slave caravan, especially with an overseer walking right beside her.
So Captain Prillwitz followed the slave caravan and also observed how they set up camp for the night and how the ZPKK comrade was raped. It pained him personally to witness this, as he saw it as his own failure. But only at night would he have a chance to free the comrade. He would probably have to knock her out with a chop to the neck while she slept. There was no other way, as the comrade wouldn't expect a rescuer and would scream. Above all, she must not see her rescuer. Carrying her away would be easy; as a slim woman, she surely didn't weigh much, and with the right technique, he could carry her on his shoulders for kilometers. And then? Tricky. It would probably be best to leave her near the transition and disappear himself.
But suddenly, something happened that Captain Prillwitz hadn't anticipated. After three rapes, her inexplicable screaming—without even being touched—followed by a green flash and a bang, with which the comrade vanished into thin air. Captain Prillwitz knew exactly what had happened. The comrade was safe and had landed directly at the transition. He was annoyed that he hadn't thought of this simple solution himself. Be that as it may, he was now relieved of responsibility. It would be foolish, though, if the comrade returned directly to the other side now. In that case, he'd need a *very* good excuse. Perhaps that one of those strange zone phenomena had held him up outside while he was checking something. No one could verify that. The ZPKK comrade would never make it back through the zone alone. If she did, she'd almost certainly be dead soon. Two other possibilities remained: If the comrade returned here again, everything else would truly be her own problem and no longer concern him. If she went somewhere else in Peridëis, he wouldn't need to do anything either. Captain Prillwitz decided to go all in and try to find the special researchers again. He *really* wanted to know what they were doing and whether it could endanger his own secret project.
But first, he needed to eat and drink, as he was now genuinely hungry and thirsty. So he turned toward the stream to drink some clear water, which in this world always tasted absolutely excellent.
This, then, was what had happened to Captain Prillwitz in the meantime. But now he stood astonished in the bushes near the stream, watching this lieutenant who bore the common name Thomas but was usually called Tim. In the MfS, people addressed each other by first names and "du" when their ranks weren't too far apart. Since this lieutenant had previously held a higher rank, it wasn't entirely straightforward. But in any case, this undisciplined guy had clearly been overcome by his urges again and had committed a serious violation of standing orders. Captain Prillwitz had always been against entrusting such people with

such responsible tasks. You could see what came of it.
And then this woman!
And what a woman. Never had Captain Prillwitz seen *such* an erotic woman. Beautiful women: Yes. Very beautiful women: Also. But this naked woman in the stream made Captain Prillwitz suddenly understand certain books and films where a man lost his mind completely over a woman. This was exactly that kind of woman! What was she doing to him?! Spellbound, Captain Prillwitz watched her bathe, tracing the contours of her body, her full, round buttocks, her equally full breasts with provocatively protruding nipples surrounded by almost hypnotically raised, furrowed areolas. And her feminine hips… it was… was… was… breathtaking. How had this lieutenant, this demoted guy, managed to get hold of this miracle of feminine allure?
Then, a wild desire began to sprout in Captain Prillwitz. Perhaps it was Peridëis's fault, perhaps it was because Captain Prillwitz had driven himself into a state of extreme sexual distress. And as is well known, sexual distress can indeed overthrow reason. Captain Prillwitz was no longer in control. Not at all. He had to have this woman. Any other woman… didn't matter. But this one. And there was a way… he had an idea how he could possess this woman. At least once. Just one single time. There was no other way. It consumed him. This woman… this unbelievably sensual woman.
Captain Prillwitz observed the couple closely. Yes. The looks between them were unmistakable; this wasn't just a purely friendly relationship. This woman desired the lieutenant. She was clearly in love with him. And that was a condition for the diabolical plan Captain Prillwitz had, as paradoxical as it might sound.
Captain Prillwitz cautiously approached the bank. His body tensed like a spring. His eyes narrowed to slits. Now the lieutenant left the water, heading toward Captain Prillwitz, which made things easier. But unfortunately, the young woman was looking in his direction. Captain Prillwitz would have to wait a bit longer.
The lieutenant got dressed. Captain Prillwitz looked at him in astonishment. This lieutenant, this demoted guy nicknamed Tim, was putting on a uniform. But it was a uniform like the ones he knew from home. How was that possible? Then the lieutenant turned slightly, and Captain Prillwitz saw that the uniform didn't cover the penis. Now he understood. The lieutenant was a bailiff in this land! A traitor!
But wait, reporting the lieutenant would betray himself. He'd have to handle this alone. And he could even profit from it. It fit into his plan.
Now the young woman looked in another direction. Good! Silently, Captain Prillwitz approached the lieutenant from behind, carefully avoiding touching any branches or stepping on any twigs on the ground. The lieutenant was an experienced fighter, so extreme caution was needed. A leap! A strike from behind! The lieutenant collapsed unconscious, and Captain Prillwitz skillfully

caught him in his arms. Not a sound had betrayed what had just happened. Captain Prillwitz quickly dragged the unconscious lieutenant into the underbrush. Had the beautiful woman seen them? No! Captain Prillwitz bound the lieutenant with the rope he carried, alongside a riding crop, as was customary for all men in this land. He used the lieutenant's rope to additionally secure his feet. For a gag, Captain Prillwitz used his tie, as he had nothing better at hand. He dragged the lieutenant deep into the underbrush and secured the bound man to a tree, ensuring he couldn't free himself or move. Captain Prillwitz was an absolute expert in such matters, just like the lieutenant. But he had triumphed through surprise, the mother of most victories, as Captain Prillwitz liked to say.

Then Captain Prillwitz cautiously but quickly returned to the stream, to this dreamlike beautiful woman.

The dreamlike beautiful woman was now dressed. In her dress with exposed breasts, she looked stunning. The dress framed her breasts perfectly, and the skirt part accentuated her feminine hips and buttocks in an almost unsurpassable way. The beautiful woman had by now noticed Tim's disappearance. But she didn't seem panicked. So she hadn't seen the abduction. But Captain Prillwitz wouldn't need to overpower her anyway.

Captain Prillwitz stepped out of the forest.

Alisha cried out in surprise.

The man is in my hands, said Captain Prillwitz as calmly as he could. But he wasn't calm. He couldn't look Alisha in the eyes. She was driving him out of his mind. Thank goodness the plan was already fully formed. Captain Prillwitz swallowed. The man is in my hands, he repeated, his voice hoarse. You can have him back, but it comes at a price.

A moment passed.

What price? Alisha finally asked, observing the stranger. He didn't look stupid, muscular, exuding power, but also narrow-mindedness and fanaticism. This man was absolutely to be taken seriously. And he had undoubtedly defeated Tim. Poor Tim. This was already the second time this had happened to him. It would surely dent his confidence.

Alisha thought hard. Nothing could really happen to them. That's just how it was here. You could count on that; she was in Peridëis. But this man reminded Alisha of a completely different danger, one from home. This man looked, in every fiber, like Stasi. Alisha had grown up in Berlin, and the regular Stasi people you encountered at every turn in certain districts—she could spot them in the dead of night. At least the official ones. Probably not the covert ones. But the official ones had such an arrogant look, such ugly short haircuts, and such hideous civilian clothes that you simply *had* to recognize them. Something etched itself into their faces. And into their behavior. And into their clothes, even when they weren't in uniform. And into their speech. Alisha couldn't consciously say what it was, but

there was something she unconsciously recognized. Just like how, in a hospital, she could distinguish doctors from nurses with 100% certainty. She had long puzzled over what the difference was, speculating from facial expressions to hairstyles. But a nurse had laughed and explained that doctors' coats buttoned in the front, while nurses' buttoned in the back. That simple. And how many complicated theories Alisha had come up with before… But no matter how many distinctive traits Stasi people had, *this* man surely embodied *all* of them. For a brief moment, Alisha had wondered if he might belong to the special researchers. She hadn't seen him with them, but… Still, she dismissed the thought. His clothing was slightly different, but in key details, and his face looked different. This man seemed… more Stasi-like…, Alisha thought. Absolutely clear. But why don't I have that pounding in my throat that I should have in this situation? That feeling of being threatened by a venomous reptile, like I know from home? What's different now?

Captain Prillwitz could have told her. He was not in control of himself. In truth, this woman could have done whatever she wanted with him. She just didn't know it.

What price? Alisha asked, genuinely worried.

Once.

What? Alisha was confused.

You shall belong to me once, Captain Prillwitz said hastily, adding, You see, it's not much. Then you'll get your friend back.

Alisha was shocked and relieved at the same time. This was something that would at least be over quickly, nothing fundamental, nothing everlasting. And at least this man wasn't sleazy, the kind that would make you feel dirty for ages. An asshole, sure, but at least a real man. Not an asshole without a spine. Alisha actually thought exactly that.

You're making this guy palatable to yourself, Alisha suddenly thought.

Captain Prillwitz observed Alisha's expressions and breathed a sigh of relief when he read that he had a chance to possess her, at least this one time. He pressed on: But I want you to truly give yourself to me. And make an effort. Anything less doesn't count.

Alisha thought frantically. The man had her in his grasp. An intelligent, close-combat-trained muscleman who also had Tim. He could take her anyway. So what did he want? Probably the feeling of being accepted. In essence, her task was to genuinely make him feel that, as everything else in her current situation wasn't negotiable. But suppose she played the good whore just this once—where was the guarantee that he'd keep his promise?

Alisha asked the question aloud. How do I know you'll keep your promise? She consciously forced herself to use "du," which was hard with this man.

Captain Prillwitz was prepared, as he had thought this question through

thoroughly, including the fact that he had a secret to protect and a mission to fulfill. Very simple, said Captain Prillwitz. Your friend isn't just here unlawfully; he's also committed treason. I know exactly what that uniform means (the bailiff uniform was unfortunately clearly visible on the ground). But I, too, am not supposed to be here, strictly speaking. That's not nearly as serious as his treason, but still. Now, your friend wants to see you again. For that, he needs to be able to return here. But I also want to come back to this land. If one betrays the other, we both lose. Because neither can have seen the other here without having been here unlawfully themselves. If that gets out, the way back here is barred for both of us. Forever. So we both have an interest in not betraying each other. But you shall compensate for the fact that I'm bringing far more to this deal with a one-time service to me. Because if I don't report his treason, I make myself guilty of treason.

Captain Prillwitz fell silent. He suddenly felt drained.

Alisha thought feverishly. Was this man, despite his blackmail, playing somewhat fairly? Wait, she thought. He was omitting that there were other possibilities. Tim didn't *have* to return to the GDR and the Stasi. True, he'd never be able to go back to his homeland, like a Wall fugitive. Admittedly. But it was still an option. If she gave herself to him, would all problems be solved? No. They wouldn't. This man would still have Tim in his grasp. A transgression versus treason; he himself had only illegally entered Peridëis, but Tim was considered a defector, a real traitor by them. Who knows, that might even cost Tim his neck, while the other could pose as a hero. What to do? Alisha thought desperately. The man had Tim, that was a fact. But on the other hand, maybe he was just as afraid of being betrayed. Even a suspicion might be enough for the Stasi to transfer him elsewhere. Not punish, but transfer. To a place from where he could no longer reach Peridëis. So he really had to be interested in ensuring that nothing, absolutely nothing, about his presence here got out.

And he was putting himself in the wrong right now.

Alisha clung to these thoughts. She swallowed her agitation, looked at the ground, and said, I agree. I will give myself to you. You will possess me this one time, and I will make a great effort to satisfy you. But you will give me Tim back?

Captain Prillwitz nodded breathlessly. He couldn't speak. The arousal prevented it.

And you firmly promise never to betray Tim?

Captain Prillwitz nodded again.

Alisha reached behind her with both hands and untied the bow that held her dress together. She mechanically loosened the laces on her back with her index fingers. Then she pulled her shoulders together, and the dress slid down her arms to the ground. Since Alisha wore nothing under the dress, she now stood naked before Captain Prillwitz.

Captain Prillwitz stood motionless in front of her.
How could she get this over with as quickly as possible? Paradoxically, probably by arousing this man as much as possible. By doing what could bring a man to orgasm quickly. She had read in a novel how a whore developed the utmost artistry precisely because it allowed her to move on to the next client—and his wallet—faster. In that book, the whore had also written that a good whore didn't look provocative like a cheap one but rather slightly ashamed, with a hint of humility.
That's what Alisha did now. She lowered her head and looked at the man with a slightly ashamed expression. But at the same time, she made a subtle hip movement and gently parted her labia with her fingers. Not in an ingratiating way, but as if she'd been forced to offer herself. She looked up at the man with a submissive gaze and slightly opened her mouth.
Captain Prillwitz reacted instantly, exactly as Alisha had intended. He hurriedly shed his clothes. No, he didn't want to take Alisha while dressed, with his trouser flap down. That would have felt like a desecration to him. There she stood, this intoxicating beauty of a young woman, preparing herself for him. She held her sex open for him and moved her pelvis slightly toward him. This unbelievably feminine pelvis. Now she lowered herself to the ground. With her thighs spread wide. And she offered him her innermost self. She gave herself to him. And her humble gaze stripped Captain Prillwitz of what little reason he had left.
Alisha noted, half surprised, that her rape was less dramatic than expected. Peridëis likely played a major role in that, as it felt a bit like a dream: nothing could really happen to you; truly extreme things didn't occur, your own desires weren't entirely disregarded, you couldn't get pregnant, and there were no diseases. And this man was at least not repulsive. If he weren't such a creep, he could have been something. Above all, what worked for Alisha was that she was doing this for Tim, sacrificing herself for him, saving him…
The man now thrusting into her, riding her with vigorous thrusts, bent down and took one of Alisha's breasts in his mouth to suck on it. Would he want to climax? Of course he would. Then Alisha noticed that milk had apparently been flowing from her breasts the whole time. Her stomach was wet with it, the man had a considerably large, dripping wet stain on his clothes, and the milk was running down Alisha's sides. Why? Was she aroused? She probably was. Why, though? Maybe because she'd been thinking of Tim. That was a good approach! Her beloved. She was giving herself for him, to save him. She'd do anything and more if it could help him. Alisha felt that her vulva was soaking wet. But did her damn body have to overdo it like that? No, she'd been thinking of Tim, everything was fine. Good for her, because she wouldn't get sore, and good for the man, because he'd come faster. Alisha decided to let herself go, as genuine acting was hard for her. She thought firmly of Tim, how he would take her once he could. Yes, that

worked. A moan escaped Alisha. Good. She let go of her inhibitions. The man might be using her for his satisfaction, but thoughts were free, and she was dreaming of being taken by Tim. The man riding her now, Alisha used as a pleasure boy to spice her fantasies with real sensations. It worked. The paths of paradise are often wondrous, but they are wondrous, Alisha thought. She just had to wait until her body signaled an orgasm, like a kettle whistling to announce that the fire had heated its water enough. She only acted willing but did nothing. He acted like the stove did with the kettle. And she was about to have an orgasm, one that wouldn't be among the worst of her life. And so it was. You did well, pleasure boy, but I dedicate this not-so-bad orgasm to my darling anyway. His name is Tim. And only he will truly possess me. And since an orgasm, especially a not-so-bad one, doesn't happen without a certain organ enveloping another certain organ in a certain way, Captain Prillwitz lost all sense of sight and sound, and he experienced, in the height of ecstasy, thrust after thrust, and poured his seed endlessly deep into the beautiful woman's womb.

Alisha lay on her back in the grass, recovering. She felt a bit ashamed for letting herself go. But she didn't dare close her legs, not wanting to seem dismissive. Not so close to the goal. Instead, she clenched her vulva, causing the forced semen to flow down her inner thighs onto the ground. Not all of it, probably, but most of it at least. What would grow here if semen could produce plants? A silly thought.

Captain Prillwitz lay on his side, feeling incredibly relieved, almost as light as a bird, and regretted nothing. The slut had wanted it, that was clear from her sounds and reactions. No. Not a slut. She wasn't that. She really wasn't. This beautiful woman.

Captain Prillwitz eventually recovered. He stood up and got dressed again. I will keep my promise, he said firmly. Come.

Alisha jumped up and followed the man. Naked.

Captain Prillwitz actually led her to Tim, who had by now regained consciousness and looked at Captain Prillwitz with wide, startled eyes. Captain Prillwitz removed the gag from his mouth and even loosened the restraints—not completely, but enough for Tim to finish the rest himself.

Listen, said Captain Prillwitz. You've committed treason; I haven't. But I've still disobeyed an order. Now, there's a pact. With a price your girlfriend has already paid for you. If you play along, you can continue as before, and I won't cross your path. And I'll continue as before, and you won't cross mine. Officially, neither of us knows about the other; we both stay silent. We both benefit. If you don't play along, you risk your neck, you know that. Let your girlfriend explain the rest. One more thing: My part holds on the condition that you don't try to trip me up in any way. If you do, or if you spy on me, I'm free to turn you in. Is that clear?

Tim nodded palely. He was immensely relieved to escape this dire situation.

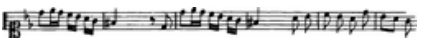
Captain Prillwitz disappeared among the trees. Neither Alisha nor Tim had the slightest desire to follow him.

For a long while, silence reigned.

Will he keep his promise? Alisha asked.
I think so, Tim replied after a long pause. Anyone who's seen Peridëis has a lot to lose. Did he rape you?
That was the deal, Alisha answered.
Was it bad?
No.
Do you want to talk about it?
Yes, a bit. He didn't really get close to me. Honestly, it's much more important to me that he keeps his end of the bargain. Otherwise, I'm more angry at him. But not so much because of the rape itself, but because he inserted himself between us. Because he dared to attack my happiness.
Your happiness? Tim asked hoarsely. Am I that important?
Yes. Alisha had tears in her eyes. Then she added, But really not because of the rape; on other occasions, I'd have brushed off the dust afterward and thought about more important things. No, I mean the existential threat in his actions. That's what I *really* resent him for.
Tim took a deep breath. A few moments later, he suddenly smiled mischievously and said, I see something you don't see.
Alisha's mood instantly improved. What does it look like?
It's transparent and you can hear it.
You can hear it? Alisha looked around. Ah! she exclaimed, there's a real fountain over there!
It was a charming spring. A jet of water shot about one and a half meters straight up from a hole in the rock, then flowed as a small trickle toward the stream.
Come on, Tim called, freed himself from the rest of his restraints, and pulled Alisha, still naked, toward the spring.
What are you going to do? Alisha asked, confused.
Have you ever heard of the so-called "women's shower"?
No, but I can guess.
Tim laughed. It's an ancient contraceptive method. You try to flush the semen out of the vagina with water after intercourse. Not a truly reliable method, but if you've had unprotected sex, it's still better than nothing. There are handheld versions with a rubber bulb for pumping and a nozzle to insert into the vagina. And larger ones with a bucket and hose. Here, we have a natural women's shower. Go on, get up there, you'll feel cleansed inside afterward.
That was a really good idea. And afterward, Alisha would take another bath in the

stream. She carefully positioned herself with legs spread over the spring, initially holding the water jet back with one hand. But its strength turned out to be just right. Alisha parted her labia and let the water jet flow directly into her vagina. She felt it reach every corner, cleaning thoroughly. Alisha closed her eyes, stayed in position, and gently rocked her pelvis to direct the water everywhere. The water flowed and flowed and flowed.
That's enough now, Tim's voice came from a distance.
Alisha opened her eyes. Now I feel good, she said. Let's bathe a bit more in the stream, okay?
They both returned to their old bathing spot and bathed extensively.
Now I'm clean, Alisha said finally. Suddenly, she laughed. I won't be this complicated with every future rape. This one just wasn't entirely to my taste.
Others are?
If they're like the ones in my wet dreams, then yes. You'll have to live with that.
Tim laughed. Don't think I'm indifferent to it, he said, but I hope your sacrifice will indeed keep his mouth shut, especially since he'll probably feel guilty about it.
You think so? Alisha asked.
He usually rides on letters, paragraphs, regulations, and rules. But now he's been caught and let himself go. Rape! Think about it. He completely lost control of himself. I bet that'll weigh on him. That's an extra ace for us.
Alisha found that not illogical. But she was still worried.
Something else occurs to me, said Alisha. I'd really like to practice the flashing again.
Tricky, Tim said. In the beginning, you absolutely need a very striking place as a target for practice.
Let's use the place where I was raped, Alisha said seriously.
Really?
Yes.
Isn't that a bit much?
No! Alisha said emphatically. Avoidance is the worst way to overcome fear. This way, I'm not a pawn of events; I reclaim the memory of that place with a different meaning. Come on! I'm neither a prudish nun nor an oversensitive mimosa, and I once slapped a snitch in my class after she ratted me out to the others for making out.
They began to practice. After about ten minutes, they had their first success. With green fire, a cloud of smoke, and the stench of sulfur. The next success came faster, and then it got better and better bit by bit.
Maybe we should actually try targeting less pleasant places, Tim suggested eventually.
Later, said Alisha. I'm satisfied for today.

But just to be safe, we'll go get some crystals again. You never know.
And so they did. The rest of the evening passed quietly. Alisha enjoyed how Tim drew his life's elixir from her breasts but skipped the usual little relaxation exercise with her finger. Tightly entwined, they fell asleep.



The Crossroads

When Alisha and Tim woke up in the morning, Alisha mumbled, We don't need even more comrades now, do we? Or is this some enchanted place under an evil curse?
Tim laughed. Honestly, I don't know, he replied. The transition I first used to come here must be nearby, but I haven't seen anything familiar yet. If more of them show up, we'll know.
Don't jinx it, Alisha said, stuffing his mouth with her breast.
How can anyone pass this up? Alisha asked when Tim had had enough. I mean, it feels more than pleasant, the intimacy is unmatched, it's not exhausting, it makes your breasts bigger, you get rid of extra calories the easy way, men want it anyway—so why do people make a fuss? Because of morals and decency?
Is morality and decency *always* good? Tim asked back.
Apparently not, Alisha growled.
They had an indecently lavish breakfast. A chicken had stopped by and laid four freshly boiled eggs just for them. Alisha nearly burned her fingers on the rolls from the roll tree, they were so fresh. There was no shortage of fruits and vegetables, they found perfectly decent coffee berries too, Alisha provided the cream herself, but they could have used some butter. Alisha decided she needed to learn how to make butter, or they should bring some along. The slave trader's women's butter had certainly impressed her. Maybe it was a good idea to carry a few small items as travel gear instead of relying on Peridëis to always provide everything automatically.
Then they set off again. On the azure paved path.
It wasn't long before they reached a crossroads. To the right, the azure paved path continued; to the left, a path was paved with gray stones; and straight ahead, the path was paved with yellow stones. Just as the four paths met, so did four valleys, each bordered by steep cliffs, all so beautiful that it would have been impossible to choose one over the others. But for Alisha and Tim, the choice was clear: they would follow the azure paved path.
I know this crossroads, Tim exclaimed excitedly. To the left is the transition I always used.
And you've never taken our path? Alisha asked.

No, Tim replied. But there are countless valleys, so it's not that big a coincidence. From here, I know the way even without directions.
To the Red Rose City?
Exactly. That's our actual destination. You'll have an audience with the Peri there.
Is she beautiful?
Yes, very much so.
And powerful?
That too.
And can she do magic?
Yes. My dry materialism honestly doesn't help me much there. She can do things that are completely beyond me. Only my basic thoughts about Peridëis help me out.
Spare me those, Alisha laughed. Let's stick with: she can do magic *here*, right?
Yes.
Can she fly too?
You can do that too, as you well know.
Yeah, yeah, and the witch's leap. By the way, we should get some new fool's gold…
Good idea!
…and I've got magic milk.
And you can learn even more, Tim concluded.
But as a witch, aren't I kind of like the Peri?
Never dare ask the Peri something like that. You're nothing compared to her. Even if we're essentially no different from the Peris, they still have older rights, know certain secrets, and have access to things we can't touch. Never lose respect for the Peris, even if they're not all-powerful!
Alright, I'll keep quiet, Alisha said. I'm just curious, that's all.
Whoa, who's that?! Alisha added, pointing ahead.

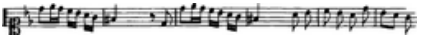
It was the ZPKK comrade that Alisha saw. She had indeed landed back at the transition, naked as always in such cases, but hadn't returned to the other side. There had been reasons why she came to Peridëis, and things had happened here that gave her pause. Because everything felt right and she felt safe, she stayed. So much had felt right, but there was also a final drop that made the barrel of reasons overflow: she had experienced everything with a deep sense of happiness, and the ugly dwarf only appeared when she thought of her life outside, but something had swept her away, saved from her old self! Back at the entrance to this realm, the realm had given her a gift, as if in apology—her breasts, firm and girlish, had suddenly swelled dramatically, a tormenting yet intensely pleasurable pain pumped her breasts up ruthlessly and fiercely, making blue veins visible at the

sides, her nipples, once merely budding, now protruded stiff and large, while her areolas bulged prominently outward. And as the ZPKK comrade, Gisela, gasping with pain and pleasure, sank to her knees, staring fascinated at her own breasts, something magnificent happened that felt primordially feminine: from her nipples, single drops of milk first trickled, then became a stream running down her breasts and dripping onto her thighs, until the two streams turned into a fountain. Gisela experienced a state of ecstatic happiness as both breasts sprayed their milk in numerous jets across the landscape. Where the milk hit the ground, delicate flowers instantly sprouted from the grass. Never had Gisela experienced pain so joyfully lustful, never had she been so happy at all.
That's when Gisela, the former ZPKK comrade, made a final decision. She wasn't stupid. She had a rough idea of what was happening here, and above all, what wasn't. There were certain things that concerned her personally. She felt she could resolve these things here to her satisfaction. But this time on her own path, not trailing someone else or following in their footsteps.
Gisela, likely due to certain dreams hidden in the deepest corners of her soul, quickly fell into the hands of a slave hunter. He was a very rough, muscularly built slave hunter with an impressive penis, who, besides Gisela, had another slave in tow—his Sunamite[71], his travel provisions.
Alisha and Tim, who had cautiously slipped into the bushes, watched as the slave hunter passed by with his two slaves.

She doesn't look unhappy, Tim said. She probably won't betray Peridëis's secrets.
Why do your agents betray Peridëis anyway, if it's true that Peridëis "corrupts," as you call it?
Simple. The Stasi controls whether they're allowed back. So they try to play a double game. But the Stasi cross-checks everything with reports from other sources, subtly and kindly rubs it in their faces, and gives them the feeling that they know everything anyway. Or will find out. Plus, they act like they think Peridëis is great and are just researching, checking for unknown dangers. And other stuff like that. Since they present themselves as friends of Peridëis and as insiders, the infiltrated agents don't always realize they're snitching.
What a bunch of scum, Alisha sighed. Are we almost past this demon realm?
I don't think we'll run into more of these comrades, Tim reassured her. For one, we're moving away from this transition, and for another, this many people from the other side was a really big exception. Believe me, I know for sure. Besides,

71 Sunamite: Named after the biblical figure Abishag of Shunem, but documented in many non-biblical cultures. According to ancient belief, a woman who brings health or longevity to a man through her presence alone. Depending on tradition, this is achieved through her scent or, e.g., her milk. In Peridëis, it's obviously the milk.

I'm the one who has to be careful. And *I* don't have any concerns anymore.
Sure?
Sure.
Then this would be a good spot to gather some more fool's gold; I shudder at the thought of having to walk that last stretch again, even if it was a valuable experience.

And so they chipped some fresh fool's gold from a nearby rock, just in case they needed a new escape destination.

The Sand Path

Alisha and Tim walked along the azure paved path. That people frequently passed through here was evident when a parrot insulted them with *really* indecent words. That was still bearable. After all, the animals in Peridëis could talk, if only a little. But this parrot had mastered the art of targeted provocation, not just general taunting. Alisha and Tim eventually threw fruits, stones, and other things at the parrot. Tim landed only one solid hit, sending the bird flying at least three meters through the air. Yet the nasty creature acted as if it didn't care. Alisha finally got the idea to insult the parrot back specifically. It wasn't a far-fetched idea, as Berlin's street slang offers plenty of material for such purposes, which even the most proper woman inevitably picks up in her passive vocabulary just from overhearing. After several tries, it turned out the parrot was particularly sensitive about the colors of its feathers. And so, Alisha shouted the rhyme: Blue and green should never be seen! and giggled maliciously.
It worked like a magic spell! The parrot stayed behind. Faintly, Alisha and Tim kept hearing "Blue and green should never be seen!" but the voice didn't come closer.
Finally, we're rid of it, Alisha said.
Looks like we taught it a new insult too.
If it helps?
Tim laughed. With every weapon you create, you must always consider that it can be turned against you. Right?
Never, ever, *really* never would I combine blue and green clothes. Alisha shuddered.

A sand path branched off to the right into another valley.
I've always wanted to take this sand path, Tim said. I was told it rejoins the azure paved path after a few days, though it's a bit longer. And it supposedly has no side branches, so you can't get lost. The azure paved path doesn't offer much in the coming days, except that it's pretty, as always. Why don't we take a little detour along the sand path?
Do you know what's waiting for us there?
No idea, like I said, I've never taken it, and no one's told me about it either.
And the azure paved path really doesn't have much to offer in the next few days?
Boring, like a beautiful nude photo.
Like a beautiful nude photo?! What kind of stupid comparison is that?
It's just pretty, Tim said, but nothing more. Ultimately, the point of a nude photo is to not really be interesting. The moment it gets interesting, it's no longer a nude photo.

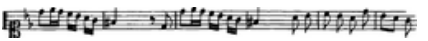
Alisha burst out laughing. Let's take the sand path. You've convinced me.
I have another idea, Tim said. Would you like to go ahead alone, and I'll follow one or two hours later?
Why?
We've never done it, except at the very beginning. You'd get to see things from *your* own world. Without them having to compromise with things from my own world.
Alone? Hm.
I'll be behind you. If you want me back at a certain point, just stop and wait for me. No matter how often, no matter how trivial the reason. We have plenty of time to make something interesting out of it.
Deal, Alisha said. That bit of security is enough for me. I'm leaving you here now, my protector, and you follow as promised in an hour.
One or two hours.
One.
One or two hours.
Fine.
After a farewell drink (Alisha insisted), Alisha set off cheerfully alone. On the sand path. She had no concerns at all. But you never know, right? What truly convinced her was the thought that too short a distance might spoil the real spice of the adventure.
The sand path initially wound through a narrow valley that sometimes became downright dark, it was so tight. And occasionally, Alisha had to hop over the small stream that flowed through this valley too. The sand path always led right through the stream. There were no bridges here. Not even stones someone had placed in the stream. Why bother, when you walked barefoot.
At one point, the high, steep cliff walls were covered for hundreds of meters with a deep purple sea of blossoms that smelled intoxicating. There were incredible numbers of colorful butterflies sipping nectar from the flowers. Alisha had to practically wade through the swarm of butterflies to continue her path.
When the flowering cliffs ended, the valley widened into a small plain, and the stream split. One part flowed along the cliff on the left around the small plain, and the other along the cliff on the right. The plain itself was one vast meadow with lush, tall grass and many flowers. And in the middle of the almost circular valley stood a stone tower. Alisha was drawn to the tower, as the sand path led directly toward it.
What might be in that tower?
Alisha continued. On her way to the tower, she startled a hare that bolted, and a tiny horse that let her pet it. It was barely half a meter tall but looked exceptionally pretty, Alisha thought.
When Alisha had approached the tower to about two hundred meters, she

suddenly heard a woman singing. At first, she thought she'd misheard, but when she paused, it was unmistakable: a woman was singing. Alisha studied the tower. A strange tower, as there was no door visible at the bottom, and the only window was at the very top. Was the door on the other side? What kind of tower could this be? Alisha thought of treacherous sirens. Or a witch. No. She wouldn't approach further without careful reconnaissance.
Cautiously, Alisha circled the tower at a distance, trying to observe it as Tim might have. The tall grass made it easy.
Now the singing had stopped. There was no door on the other side of the tower either. And no additional window up top.
Alisha completed her circle, returning to where she'd started.
Should she approach the tower further?
Don't get scared! a voice called from behind her.
Alisha nearly wet herself in fright and spun around.
It was Tim.
I nearly wet myself from fright!
Sorry, I didn't mean to. But it wouldn't have been that bad.
Why not? Alisha asked, indignant.
Because you're not wearing any panties.
Now Alisha laughed. She was glad Tim was there. And how else could he have made himself known?
Who might be in that tower? she asked Tim. I don't dare get closer.
Let's go check.
What if it's something dangerous? The tower is weird! There's no door at the bottom, just one window at the top. And I heard a woman singing.
Then you've already found out a lot. We'll only learn more if we go closer.
You go first.
Come with me!
No, you go first.
But what could be there?
A woman.
So what?
Who knows who she is!
Tim groaned. Fine, I'm going, he said. And he set off. Upright, without the slightest caution.
Typical man, Alisha thought. Always going all in. On the other hand, it was handy that there were men who could do that for you. She followed Tim at a cautious distance, well hidden in the tall grass.
Now Tim had reached the base of the tower. Alisha stayed concealed in the grass.
Suddenly, the woman's singing could be heard again.
Tim stepped back a few meters from the tower, shielded his eyes with his hand

against the sun directly overhead, and looked up. All of a sudden, he laughed.
Why was he laughing?
Tim came back to Alisha. It's Rapunzel up there, he said.
Alisha was stunned. Rapunzel? Seriously? How do you figure?
Look up!
Alisha ran to the spot where Tim had stood, shielded her eyes with her hand against the sun directly overhead, and looked up. Then Alisha laughed too.
Indeed! Up there stood a blonde beauty of a woman, singing, combing her incredibly long hair, and braiding it into an incredibly long plait. Everything fit. The secluded area, the tower without a door, the beautiful blonde woman with incredibly long hair…
Then Tim asked, Should I call out? You know: "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair!"
Don't you dare! Alisha replied.
But why not? Then we'd know for sure.
We know for sure already, Alisha said darkly. But if she lets her hair down, you'll climb up and pleasure her instead of me, and in the end, the witch will come and throw you off the tower. The version without trouble with the witch would be you screwing me here in the grass while Rapunzel watches. And besides: Why doesn't that silly cow nail her braid to the window frame inside and climb down herself?
Tim laughed. But then she'd have to cut her braid off at the bottom.
Fair point. She wouldn't do that, Alisha said. For women, beauty trumps practicality.
You really want to leave her sitting up there in the tower?!
The price is too high. Besides, someone else will pull that hot potato out of the fire, because the story has to play out. Instead of you, another rescuer will come, fool around with Rapunzel, get caught, have his eyes pecked out, and so on.
Are you sure about that?
Absolutely sure. You, at least, won't be the one, even if I have to pluck out Rapunzel's hairs one by one.
Come on, it's not her fault.
Doesn't matter.
I give up. Shall we move on?
Yes.
The singing still echoed from above.
She didn't even notice us, Alisha said as they moved away from the tower. So you don't need to feel guilty. Nothing's changed.
Say, Tim asked, did you really mean that for women, beauty comes before purpose?
A bit, yeah. Don't you notice it yourself?
Sure, at least compared to men.

Men are the only comparison, Alisha interjected.
Not entirely, Tim replied. There are also gay men and lesbians, and surely gradations in between.
Fair enough, yes. But not in the majority, and that's what matters when it comes to the norm, the big ideal.
I've always wondered if women's focus on adornment and grooming is a result of external circumstances, Tim said, like upbringing, society, fashion, and so on.
I don't think so, not at all, Alisha said. Sure, partly, of course. But mainly, I think it's an inner urge that women and girls just have. From the start. No matter the upbringing. Exceptions prove the rule. I had a blast with it myself, and I saw it constantly with my girlfriends—they wanted to dress up, while boys just didn't care what you put on them. Or how we girls would play role-plays with dolls or among ourselves, while boys were more into roughhousing and adventuring. And later too. Have you ever noticed that men basically never wear deep necklines?
Tim laughed. Yeah, but that's normal. Women have breasts.
Exactly, Alisha said. But women don't just want to have them; they want to show them off—that's the real point. Men have nice butts, but do men pick their clothes to show off their nice butts?
No.
Exactly. Men choose clothes more for practicality or to show some status or affiliation. But not like women, for beauty. Quite the opposite—it can even look ugly.
And muscles?
That falls under status.
Hm. And showing off breasts doesn't fall under status?
Well, catching men is catching men. But sure, among women, it's definitely status. Outshining others, looking better, or conversely, keeping others down. Or being a wallflower and, heaven forbid, not standing out while other women are watching. Carefully wearing a bra to meet the norm, making sure no nipples show through. Other women react allergically to that, and you'll get sniped at. Especially unattractive women or those past their prime are hyper-vigilant that you don't show too much physical allure. No wonder: women with sex appeal can get things from men with a flutter of their eyes or a wiggle of their breasts that women without it can't get so easily. Mark my words: nothing do women without sex appeal hate more than women with sex appeal. Hence the demand for modest clothing and behavior, for standardization, for eliminating anything too alluring.
Now you've impressed me, Tim grumbled. Have you ever told another man this?
Never.
Why didn't I ever pick up on this?
It goes right past you men. And outwardly, the facade of niceness is maintained. Kicks come from behind, often with the excuse of meaning well. If you get

caught in women's intrigue, always ask women for help; as a man, you won't see through it.
I once read that a man who thinks he's made a conquest is often just wriggling on a hook a woman cast long ago.
Always, Alisha laughed, always!
At the end of the plain, as the cliffs narrowed again into a tight valley and the two streams rejoined into a single one, Alisha looked back. Far behind them, the tower loomed high.
You know, Alisha hesitated, I'd like a sign of affection now—and since you're not allowed to take me, would you… here… where the tower is still visible…
Tim dropped to the ground: Alisha, Alisha, let down your breasts!
Giggling, Alisha dropped beside Tim, facing the tower, and offered her breast to his mouth.
Two or three moments later, her hand slipped to her lap. At first playing hesitantly, then occasionally dipping into the wet, but eventually parting the slit and vibrating with her middle finger. Until the wave of bliss came.
And always with her gaze toward where the beautiful woman with the long hair was singing. Alisha had this wonderful man at her breast. Her. She would bite to keep it that way. With the prospect of having him completely someday. Forever, with his seed deep in her womb.



Further on the Sand Path

They continued along the sand path, which led them through the side valley. Here in the valley, there was plenty of food again, and, by chance or not, even rampions. Not that Alisha or Tim had ever known what rampions looked like, but when they stood before them, they both suddenly knew. Alisha didn't find the rampions half bad.
And Tim found something else. It was a tree with round fruits, about the length and thickness of a finger, one half banana-yellow and the other a rich orange. Tim picked one of the fruits and showed it to Alisha.
What kind of fruit is that? Alisha asked. Then a memory struck her. Wait a minute… isn't this one of those fruits you showed me—no, inserted—at the very beginning? The one that swelled so nastily when it was inside me?
Yes, exactly, Tim replied. But this one is a special cultivar for everyday use. When you warm it up, it grows to about the size and thickness of a banana. No more! It also gets much less slippery than that other variety. But it vibrates a lot.
And is this fruit also for…
Yes, women use it to relax comfortably in between without much effort. You

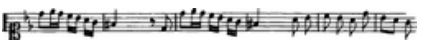
simply hold it to an interesting spot and wait until you come. You find this plant in almost every other garden because it's so useful.

Silence. For about five seconds.

I think it's time you had some milk again, Alisha said.
I don't think it's been that long since I last had some, came the reply.
I think you should drink a bit more here, just to be safe. The sight of other women, you know…
I didn't find her *that* beautiful. Besides, she was *very* far away, up there in her tower.
Please, please.
Shouldn't we keep walking?
I'm melting! You started this topic!
You little devil, Tim cursed, laughing, dropped the fruit, and laid Alisha on her back on the ground. Then he picked up the fruit again and settled beside her: Stay on your back and pull up your skirt!
Alisha pulled up her skirt.
Spread your legs.
Alisha spread her thighs wide.
You're really soaking wet. Tim took the fruit and gently inserted it deep into Alisha's wet vagina.
It really won't get too big?
Not this one. But it only reacts when it senses body heat. Afterward, you can take it out. But now Tim held Alisha's vagina closed with a firm grip on her labia. It wasn't easy, though that's hardly a bad sign during arousal.
Alisha suddenly giggled. It's starting to tickle!
The tickling grew stronger and turned into a vibration, a very pleasant, full vibration. Alisha felt the fruit begin to expand and grow longer.
It really won't get bigger?
Only as I said.
Tim felt the fruit pushing outward and released Alisha's labia. He kept the fruit gently pressed in her lap. It emerged from her, growing thicker, its humming getting stronger. Finally, Tim pulled the fruit out of Alisha's vagina. It was now about 30 centimeters long, so longer than a banana, and thicker too. And aside from vibrating strongly, it now looked quite pretty.
Tim guided Alisha's right hand to the fruit. You can handle the rest better than I can, he whispered in her ear. Besides, I want my reward now. But don't rush. If you come too quickly, I'll keep drinking mercilessly until I've drained you completely.
Alisha gave a brief smile; she was too aroused for more. She took the fruit in her hand and held it cautiously to that spot in her lap that protruded when aroused,

ready to receive what it craved.
Meanwhile, Tim turned onto his stomach, his head over Alisha's torso, as there was no other way since she was lying on her back. Then he firmly grasped one of Alisha's breasts with both hands and drew it into his mouth. Alisha let out a contented moan. She loved the moment when his mouth warmly enveloped her nipple.
As Alisha felt her milk flow, she surrendered to the sensation the vibrating wonder fruit created in her lap. Sometimes she let it slide deep into her cavity, very deep; sometimes she pressed it against the front wall of her vagina, where she'd once discovered an interesting spot long ago; sometimes she rhythmically pulled it out and in to enjoy the stretching of her vagina. But eventually, she pulled the fruit out entirely to hold it against her bud. Sideways, sometimes left, sometimes right, sometimes pressing from above, sometimes from below. The fruit varied its humming intriguingly, sometimes pulsing, sometimes buzzing steadily.
Alisha's breathing grew heavier. Tim's sucking on her breast intensified the sensation. His hand, which had rested on her free breast, now reached for its nipple, first stroking, then tweaking it. A bit later, his fingers reached behind the nipple into the areola and began milking the breast with slow movements. Just like that. The milk sprayed in wide streams from the breast, uselessly, just for the sensation of being milked. And for the sight. Alisha moaned loudly. Each wringing pull on her nipple drew her closer to her climax. Each release let her slip back a little. The next spurt from her breast pulled her even further forward, only to slide back a small step afterward… Don't change anything, Alisha hoped, please don't change anything. Keep going, keep going, keep going… Tim milked steadily and deliberately, in a perfectly consistent rhythm. Finally, it overflowed, starting from her bud and spreading through her whole body like warm liquid. Hhhhhaaaaaaaa, Alisha writhed, moaning. She came with that typical deep fulfillment she almost always felt at climax in this beautiful land, that deep wave that enveloped her entire body.
In the midst of it, she heard Tim sigh, and a moment later, Alisha felt something warm and wet running down her thigh.
Did you come? Alisha asked, a mix of shock and joy.
Yes, Tim replied, his breathing betraying his arousal.
Alisha quickly reached for the semen running down her thigh, caught as much as she could, and pressed it into her vagina.
It's not your fault, Alisha whispered to Tim.
The fruit still hummed in the grass.
Tim breathed heavily.
Alisha breathed heavily.
Some time passed.

At least I haven't quite figured out how to suppress ejaculation, Tim said finally. Or maybe deep down, I didn't want to. But I also didn't actively resist my arousal building. Or I was careless about it.
Alisha comforted him: Monks don't avoid women for nothing. You can probably smell my arousal, and I'm amazed you can handle it at all. Other men in Peridëis would've probably raped me by now, and to be honest, I keep egging you on too. I think the Peris will surely take that into account, or they'd be cruelly unfair.
It's happened to me in my sleep a few times now, Tim mused aloud.
With ejaculation?
Yes. And dried semen without any memory of a related dream. So let's hope for the Peris' sense of justice, Tim sighed. At least I feel greatly relieved.
Great! Alisha said, genuinely happy, and kissed Tim on the forehead.
Tim picked up the still-vibrating fruit. We don't need this anymore, right?
I'm satisfied, given the circumstances.
???
Because I could go again, but that's just the normal state here.
Tim laughed and tossed the fruit in a high arc into the bushes. I wonder why a tree like that grows here, he said. After all, it's a cultivar. As far as I know.
Hm. Rapunzel definitely can't sneak down from her tower and back up, so that leaves only the witch.
But what does she want with it?
Should we wait to find out?
No.
Then let's move on.
And so they continued along the sand path.



Even Further on the Sand Path

Alisha and Tim spent the night in a cave slightly elevated at a bend in the valley. From the cave, they had a beautiful view over the treetops in both directions of the valley. Conveniently, a small stream flowed past in a rocky channel at the cave's level, likely joining the stream below a little further on. Alisha took the opportunity for an extensive evening bath. By lying flat, she could fully immerse herself. Tim watched her bathe. And since Alisha was too lazy to get out of the stream, she ate her dinner lying on her stomach in the water, while Tim sat on the rock in front of her.
At night, Alisha noticed that the deeper parts of the cave glowed green, just like the underground passages they'd visited to gather fool's gold. But they didn't need new fool's gold—what for?

When Alisha woke the next morning, Tim was already having breakfast. Good morning! he said. I've discovered a little attraction.
Isn't everything here an attraction? Alisha replied, stretching and yawning.
You're a spoiled brat. I'll keep quiet.
Ooooh, Alisha said. A woman's greatest drive is curiosity!
After the urge to talk?
No, shoes come first. Will you tell me now? I'm warning you, my milk will curdle and clump if you don't.
Come with me! You'll be amazed!
Tim stepped into the stream that flowed in a rocky channel past the entrance of their cave. He walked in the direction of the flow and waved for Alisha to follow. The rocky channel ran along the cliff like a mountain road. On one side, it rose steeply; on the other, it dropped sharply. The channel was wide enough to keep a safe distance from the edge. It might have been only twenty meters down, but imagine standing at the edge of a twenty-meter drop and looking down. That's not trivial. Still, as mentioned, the channel was wide enough to spare Alisha and Tim uneasy glances downward. Walking in the stream was comfortable, and the big payoff was the lovely view into the valley. But the stream walk was short. After about a hundred meters, the stream made a right turn into a rocky crevice. As Alisha followed Tim around the bend into the crevice, she stopped, mouth agape.
The stream first flowed within the crevice onto a small rocky plateau with a large pool. The crevice, and thus the plateau within it, might have been ten or fifteen meters across. Plants grew in numerous spots. Here, the stream ended. Or rather: it flowed up the cliff. Upward! And not only that. The stream didn't flow straight but meandered, sometimes right, sometimes left, as a proper stream should. Just upward. Where it was headed wasn't clear.
Do you see what I see? Alisha asked.
The stream is flowing up the cliff, Tim said.
Alisha laughed. And besides that?
It's flowing upward.
But why?
No idea, Tim replied. I've never heard of such a thing, but that doesn't mean much. I've never wondered where all these streams in Peridëis go, the ones that constantly accompany you. The city we're heading to lies by a large lake, and many streams flow into it. But that's no explanation, because even that lake's water has to go somewhere. Have you noticed it almost never rains in Peridëis?
I've never seen rain at all. You just told me once that if it rains, it's only briefly before sunrise.
Exactly, Tim said. It's best to strip naked then so your clothes don't get wet. In most areas, rain is so rare that no one really prepares for it. Yet everything blooms

and thrives, and nearly every valley has its own stream. What does that imply?
?!?!
Somehow, the water has to get up to flow down. So there must be places where that happens.
And this would be one of those places…
Amazed, Alisha approached the upward-flowing stream. At her feet, there was a gentle, steady pull, nothing more. She dipped her hand into the upward-flowing water. It felt no different from a normal stream with flowing water. The water here might have been about half a meter deep.
What would happen if you lay flat in the water against the cliff here? Alisha asked aloud. So only your head sticks out, like when swimming?
I've thought about that too. It'd be a great chance to finally see what's at the top of these high cliffs. I've always wanted to know. But let's have breakfast first, okay?
Okay.
Alisha and Tim returned to the cave and ate a hearty breakfast.
Then Tim said, We should leave our clothes here in the cave since we're going to bathe in the stream.
No sooner said than done, and soon both were back in the pool where the stream flowed up the cliff.
How would we get back down? Alisha wondered, craning her neck to follow the stream's upward path along the cliff.
Tim broke off a branch from the nearby plants and held it in the upward-flowing water.
The current isn't strong, he said. You could easily swim against it. It's more like gravity is coming from the side, and the stream flows as before. Look, it's not even flowing faster.
That was true. The stream flowed calmly.
You know what, Tim said, I'll give it a try.
Tim waded deeper into the pool, which was about half a meter deep. He went to the spot where the water began flowing upward and wedged his legs as best he could into the cliff's sides. He found handholds in the rock and pressed his body flat into the upward-flowing stream.
It's a really strange feeling, Tim said. I barely have to hold on, and the stream only pulls me slightly. It's basically no different from lying in the stream below. And suddenly, it feels like you're standing horizontally, and the valley is upside down. A totally weird experience. It must be like what astronauts feel. Come on, try it!
Tim held Alisha's hand, which calmed her immensely, and she cautiously slid into the vertically flowing stream.
Whoa! The world tilted. Her stream no longer flowed the wrong way but as it

should. Yet the valley floor stood upright, and above them was a ceiling of cliffs. Not only that: the sun shone from ahead. Alisha giggled uncontrollably.
It's like being at a fair! she exclaimed. Will it stay like this if we let ourselves drift in the stream?
Wait, Tim said. I want to try something first.
Tim sat upright in the upward-flowing stream and slowly, cautiously stood.
Oh boy, he said. That tilts the world back, and it pulls me out.
Tim sat back fully in the water. Then, still sitting, he moved about two meters further in the flow's direction. He was now maybe three or four meters from the point where the water changed direction (up and down being rather complicated to define at the moment). Slowly and cautiously, Tim stood again.
Here, the world only tilts further away from the cliff, he said, still crouching in the stream, his head about half a meter above the water's surface. So we need to stay in the water if we want to make this trip. Tim demonstrated by tossing a handful of water upward. At a certain point, the water made a right-angle turn. What was above fell naturally back into the pool, but what was below fell into the vertically flowing stream.
Would it be dangerous to swim up the stream? Alisha asked.
No, Tim replied. There's enough safety margin. But even a real fall wouldn't matter. Have you ever seen in a cartoon how someone crashes from a tall tree, yells "Ouch," gets a bump, shakes it off, and keeps running?
Yes, Alisha laughed.
That's how it works here, Tim said. When you fall, you start flying, and beyond a certain speed, you don't accelerate further. The impact is like jumping off a table, nothing more.
So, a meter?
Maybe. Roughly. Just as an example.
Hm. No matter how high you are?
No matter.
Even at a hundred meters?
Even at a hundred meters. You just have to watch out not to crash into something on the way down, or you'll get unnecessary "ouches." If you're really clumsy, multiple unnecessary "ouches." But that's it.
Then let's try it. Even if we just test it and turn back.
Alisha swam downstream. Or uphill, depending on how you look at it. It went quite quickly since the stream was deep enough here, though her feet touched the bottom. The current helped, so Alisha only had to push off the ground occasionally. Tim followed her. Remember, don't stand up! he called. I'm not stupid! she called back.
They let themselves drift forward unhurriedly, and after a few minutes, they used a current-free hollow for an orientation break. Tim and Alisha now sat facing

each other as if in a bathtub, with only their heads above water. Above them, the opposite cliff formed a ceiling; to their left, the valley floor with all its trees and bushes and the path; to their right, the blue sky and the sun.
No fear of heights, Alisha noted.
And we're already pretty high up! Tim replied.
Any idea how high these cliffs are?
No clue. They vary. There are stories that there are other worlds up there, but I don't know what's true. There are supposed to be plateaus that hardly anyone ever reaches.
And on they went. Sometimes the upward-flowing stream veered slightly left, sometimes right, but always steadily upward. Then something happened.
Alisha shrieked and suddenly fell into a hole, which is hard to explain. From below, you'd say the vertical crevice ended, and the stream poured into a horizontal underground tunnel. But from Alisha's perspective, there was a hole in the streambed, the water plunged into it, and Alisha had plunged with it.
Tim, warned by Alisha's scream, took care to hold on tightly. He wedged his legs firmly in the streambed to avoid being pulled into the hole. The suction was strong here, no wonder Alisha had slipped in.
Now a stone came loose at Tim's foot, then another. Tim held on with all his strength, which wasn't easy since he couldn't let his body rise too far out of the streambed. Then there was a loud crash, and a large boulder broke free and plunged toward the hole.
Alisha, watch out! Tim shouted.
It crashed, it rumbled.
But the boulder didn't fall into the hole—it was too big and got wedged right at the entrance. No problem for the water, but a problem for Tim, who cursed heartily. The remaining gap was too small for either him or Alisha to pass through. Now what?
Can you hear me? Tim shouted into the remaining gap.
Yes! came the reply, audible enough despite the murmuring and rushing of the water.
Are you okay?
All fine! I just bumped my side once. A few stones fell after me, but no harm done. I fell into a small cave with a pool and from there straight up through a kind of waterfall. I'm outside, at the top. There's a meadow here. It doesn't get any higher.
Alisha, Tim called, wait, I hear you, but it's pretty straining. I have an idea: Check carefully if the meadow ends near the well and slopes down to the valley. I'll probably hear you better from there. But be careful not to fall.
Will do! came the reply from the tunnel.
Tim waited. Moments later, Alisha's voice rang out clearly from above. No

longer from the water hole and not far away. She was indeed at the top of the cliff, and there was a plateau.
Helloooo! Can you hear me?
Yes!
It was much easier to talk now.
I can hear you much better now, Tim said, and you don't even need to shout.
There's a big meadow up here, Alisha reported from above. There's a stone well, and I came out of it. The water flows over the well's edge like a spring. From there, it's a normal little stream running across the meadow. How's it going with you?
The tunnel the water flows through is blocked by a stone now, Tim replied. So I can't get up, and you can't get down. We need to find another way to get you back to the valley. Any ideas? See anything that could help?
I can look around, Alisha replied. There's a proper stone well here, and the edge of this plateau is marked by a simple wooden fence, so someone must be here. Maybe they know a way. Or I'll find a rope or something. Plus, I'm curious now. Should I explore and report back later?
Do that! If you find nothing, I can get the fool's gold. Worst case, I'll send your dress and the fool's gold up with the water flow.
Let's keep that as a last resort, Alisha called from above. It'd be a shame if the dress got stuck. Will you wait here?
No, I don't want to stay in the water that long. Our cave isn't far. I'll go back to our stuff, dry off, and wait there. Say, you can whistle loudly with two fingers, right?
I can, Alisha said.
I'm not as good, but it's enough. So, one whistle, I come without our stuff; two whistles, with our stuff. That work?
Yes. And you answer with the same number? I need to know you heard me!
Will do.
Alright. I'm heading off now, okay?
Good luck!
Tim swam back against the current to their cave. It wasn't too difficult, as he found plenty of spots in the streambed to push off with his feet, and the current was only moderate. In surprisingly little time, he was back in the cave where they'd spent the night.
Lazing around can be quite nice sometimes, Tim thought, lying on his back at the cave's entrance and dozing off.

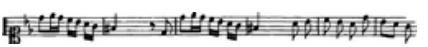
Meanwhile, Alisha had returned to the well and looked around. This was a completely different land up here! It was quite warm, but not excessively so. She couldn't gauge how large the plateau was. To her left, a roughly made wooden

fence separated the plateau from the drop; on all other sides, there was nothing but grassland with scattered trees. Where should she go? Best to follow the stream. That way, she could easily find her way back if needed, always have water to drink, and food would most likely be found near a stream. And other people would also be near water and food.
Who might live up here?
Alisha set off.
She hadn't gone far when she spotted an oven behind a gentle hill. It stood in the middle of the meadow, a bit off from the stream.
Curious, Alisha approached the oven. There were rolls inside. She took one out and tried it. It tasted awful. No salt at all, at the very least. Disgusted, Alisha spat it out.
Suddenly, she heard numerous squeaky voices from the oven:
"Oh please, pull us out too, pull us out too, or we'll burn! We're already fully baked."
Alisha nearly swallowed a piece of roll by mistake.
Yuck! she exclaimed. It's just right that you burn to charcoal so no wood is wasted baking better rolls!
And she moved on.
Passing another gentle hill, Alisha saw a tree with oranges. She wanted to try one but couldn't peel the skin off. After breaking two fingernails (small note: they grew back quickly), she bit off a piece of the peel with her teeth. It tasted vile, and the orange's fibers got stuck in her teeth, but the fruit still wouldn't come free from its peel. Alisha tore at the remaining peel with her teeth, only managing to split the orange into two halves of peel and flesh. To get rid of the peel's taste, she desperately bit into the flesh. Her teeth got hopelessly tangled in the tough, dry membrane surrounding the segments. And when she finally had some flesh in her mouth, the enjoyment was marred by numerous seeds, which she spat out one by one. At least the juice wasn't too bad.
Good thing she was naked, or she would've completely stained her beautiful dress.
Alisha jumped into the stream to clean herself, as hand-washing would've been too tedious, and painstakingly picked the tougher fruit fibers from her teeth, not forgetting to rinse her mouth.
Then she heard delicate voices from the tree:
"Oh please, shake the tree, shake the tree! We oranges are all ripe."
Never! cried Alisha. I don't want them! Now I know where those wretched oranges in the GDR come from, if there ever are any. May you rot so they have to get better fruit.
Never! cried Alisha. I don't want them! Now I know where those wretched oranges in the GDR come from, if there ever are any. May you rot so they have to

get better fruit.
And she moved on.
Passing yet another hill, Alisha saw a field full of white cabbage.
I don't even want to know! she screamed, horrified, and ran off without tasting anything. But it was no use. She smelled the white cabbage stew from canteens and school lunches, tasted it (with tough meat that had to be discarded, and caraway), or layered cabbage, or braised cabbage, or cabbage rolls, or white cabbage with blood sausage. In her mind's eye, Alisha saw white cabbage side dishes in restaurants, untouched by anyone, sitting on separate tables alongside red cabbage and carrot side dishes, just for show. Rarely did guests wander over to take some. But that there was white cabbage in paradise was too much.
Alisha! she scolded herself. You're not the only one in paradise. Maybe other people like this stuff, maybe it can be prepared better, maybe at home it was just too much of a good thing.
Still! Alisha thought. Everything is poison; it's just a matter of dose.
The cabbage stayed silent. The silence felt a bit offended to Alisha, but at least it was quiet.
Alisha forced herself not to look back. Please, please, she thought, no transparent plastic bag with musty-smelling, pre-peeled, lye-soaked potatoes! Or having to drink Zwickau beer, nicknamed euthanasia, cloudy, foamless, and tasteless.
But apparently, she had passed all the trials.
Finally, Alisha reached a small house, where the stream flowed. Beyond the house, the stream might plunge down the cliff, but that wasn't visible. What was clear was that the house stood right at the edge of the plateau, with one side overlooking the valley. From the house, a middle-aged woman looked out. But she looked so prim and flawless that a Dresden dance instructor would've fainted, and Alisha got the creeps.
Why are you afraid, my dear? the woman asked. Stay with me, and if you keep the house tidy, you'll be well off. You just need to take care to clean thoroughly and diligently shake out the sweepings from the window—then it rains in the world. I am Mother Holle.
But I need a man to suck the milk from my breasts, Alisha tried.
You milk your breasts out the window, Mother Holle replied. Spray plenty out, and it snows in the world.
Since, to Alisha's knowledge, it had never snowed in Peridëis, she grew curious, agreed, and entered her service.
But when Alisha stepped into the house, she got a real shock and decided not to stay an hour longer than necessary. With a lot of goodwill, Mother Holle's house could've been called sterile, and there was nothing in it without a purpose. Cleaning supplies were the only recognizable vice of Mother Holle, and they were in utter disarray. What's the standard for "tidy" here? Alisha thought. And:

If she were showered with gold, she'd only get painful bruises, and in Peridëis, gold would be useless anyway.
Hesitantly, Alisha objected, But I can't cook, only noodles with tomato sauce, instant soups, and toasted sandwiches.
No matter, my dear, Mother Holle said. Then the kitchen stays clean.
Then Alisha said, I always took my laundry to my mother because she has a washing machine.
No matter, my dear. Wash a bit more, and you'll learn faster.
I only vacuumed the bare minimum, Alisha said desperately.
You'll learn to scrub the room on your knees, Mother Holle said kindly. Naked as you are, you won't even soil your little dress.
Sighing, Alisha began her service with Mother Holle.
Bad, Alisha thought to herself as she started cleaning. There's not even dust here to sweep under the rug. No wonder it rains so little here. I need to make sure Mother Holle kicks me out as soon as possible. If the fairy tale holds, that should get me out of this world.
Alisha grabbed a tablecloth, along with everything on it, and shook it out the window.
Ouch! she heard from below. Startled, she looked out the window.
Who's throwing stuff down there? came a familiar voice.
It was Tim.
Alisha shouted an apology and asked if it hadn't rained.
Junk, yes; water, no, Tim's voice called back up.
Now what? Alisha had an idea. She vigorously milked her breasts out the open window. Whether due to the considerable forced pause or special circumstances, incredible showers of milk sprayed from her breasts, far more than her breast size or body could explain.
It's snowing! It's snowing!! It's snowing!!! An incredible amount of snow is falling here! Tim's voice came from below.
Not wanting to cause a climate change in Peridëis, Alisha shouted to Tim where she was and asked for advice.
Is there a gate up there that might lead down? Tim called up.
I'll check! Alisha shouted back.
Luckily, Mother Holle was out of the house (maybe harvesting cabbage), so Alisha could look around undisturbed. And lo! There was indeed a large gate, barred with a big wooden door. Behind it, she heard the sound of rushing water. The wooden door could be opened. Alisha cautiously stepped inside and looked around. Before her was a wooden hatch, likely used for pouring gold or pitch. But the hatch was locked for now. Alisha took another step.
It was a latrine. Really. Beyond it, the stream plunged into a rocky hole.
Alisha ran back to the window and told Tim what she'd seen.

Tim shouted that the stream was indeed gushing out of the cliff at his feet.
Should she risk it?
No! Tim called. Forget that nonsense; I have a better idea—jump out the window; there's meters of snow down here!
Alisha trusted Tim that it was safe in Peridëis, especially with meters of snow. But believing and knowing are two different things, so she shouted back, But we don't know if there are obstacles in between!
Throw more stuff out the window! Tim called back.
Alisha threw a bucket, a chair, and a clay pot out the window one after another.
Everything arrived undamaged! Tim shouted from below.
Hm. That was a point.
Alisha turned around. Then she heard Mother Holle returning.
Dying is better than being a cleaning ice queen in Peridëis, Alisha thought (though she didn't believe in dying) and jumped out the window.
She flew… she sank… and sank… right into Tim's arms, though they both sank deep into a snowdrift.
Well, Tim said after Alisha told him everything. Does paradise need places like this for contrast? To remind you how good you have it? Think of the Princess and the Pea, or the story of the fisherman and his wife. Or that joke about the billionaire who goes broke, has only a million left, and shoots himself. Or ask a starving man in some arid region south of the Red Sea what he thinks of cabbage soup.
Ouch, Alisha said, growing thoughtful. Will humans ever be satisfied?
Sometimes I doubt it, Tim replied.
Alisha looked around. You know, she said, despite the snow, this dreamy nature makes me think of flying over Algeria. How lucky we are with our familiar meadows and forests back home.
No scorpions, Tim winked.
No scorpions, Alisha laughed. Let's walk a bit, away from here. We've got plenty of day left.
Here, Tim said, your dress back.
Why am I not even cold? Alisha asked, but put the dress on. And though her breasts cheekily poked out of the dress, she felt much more elegant with it than without. Beauty matters, Alisha thought a bit rebelliously, and she understood why poor farmers in other lands helped build the grandest churches. That's just how people are.
They trudged several hundred meters through deep snow until spring, and then summer, returned. Then they continued along the sand path that ran through the valley. They could take breaks once they'd covered some ground.



The Red Rose City

Oh! Tim exclaimed as the sand path rejoined the azure paved path. Their side valley had narrowed into an inconspicuous gorge just before meeting the valley with the azure path, so it would've been nearly impossible to find without guidance. But that was behind them now.
Why oh? Alisha asked.
Oh, because we're almost at our destination, Tim replied.
The Red Rose City?
The Red Rose City!
Now I'm getting stage fright. What do I have to do there? I'll be facing a real Peri, after all.
You're a real witch, don't forget that. The difference between a Peri and a witch is just a matter of definition, if my theory's correct.
You and your theory. What if it's wrong?
No big deal. Just be yourself, and everything will be fine. She wants to officially welcome you, and she might even have a task for you already.
A task?
The Peris need us. Fresh ideas and dreams are new nourishment for Peridëis. Plus, there are things the Peris can't or won't do themselves. The deal is, we occasionally do something for them, and in return, the whole vast paradise—or most of it—is open to us. It's a fair trade. Your dreams taking shape benefits both sides too.
That calms me a bit. Still, my heart's pounding in my throat. Say…
Yes?
Don't think I'm… perverse or anything, but it'd really calm me down if we could… you know… right now… you drink, hold me tight, and I…
Of course!
Tim pulled her aside to a nice sandy spot by the stream, and Alisha did find some calm in Tim's physical closeness as he sucked on her while she leaned back and relaxed with her finger. This sensual feeling soothed her more than any amount of convincing words. But when she suggested a picnic afterward, Tim waved it off. No, he said, stuff yourself in the city, or you'll regret it. And from now on, save your milk for paying.
Now Alisha was excited and looked forward to the city.

They walked only about ten to fifteen minutes further on the azure paved path when the Red Rose City came into view. The valley widened dramatically, the stream split, and there stood the Red Rose City in the middle of the valley, enclosed by a two- to three-meter-high city wall and surrounded by the stream. On the far side of the city, a huge lake was visible, on whose shore the city was

built. The word “city” might have been a slight exaggeration, but the houses weren’t scattered like in a village—they were built close together, as befits a city. The azure paved path led straight over a wooden bridge through a gate into the Red Rose City. The city wall was something special, gleaming like gold, and except for a kind of castle by the lakeshore in the city’s center, nearly every building was covered in climbing roses. Red roses bloomed everywhere.
That’s why it’s called the Red Rose City, Alisha said, amazed. It doesn’t look kitschy at all. Is the city wall made of gold?
No, Tim replied. Fool’s gold. No one climbs over it because the locals have a superstitious fear of its magic.
But don’t they get suspicious seeing the fool’s gold?
Oh no. The rule is always: “The Peri is right.” But they still don’t touch it.
Alisha and Tim crossed the bridge into the city. The whole city was one big market, much like the small town they’d visited earlier. It was hard to move forward because the number of vendors (mostly women) far exceeded potential customers. Tim, laughing, fended off the vendors, clearing a path for Alisha, and shouted in her ear: Let’s find a tavern where we can have some peace!
Alisha was more than agreeable, as she was hungry.
At the next corner, they found a tavern that seemed cozy, especially since it sat on a slight hill, offering a view of the city from its windows. The wooden-latticed windows provided a shield against the many vendors, and the resolute landlady, wielding a whip, ensured Alisha and Tim remained undisturbed.
Good heavens! Alisha laughed. The whip’s quick to fly here.
Want one on your backside?
No! I’m hungry!
Once they’d found a good spot, Tim said to the landlady: Taste her milk first before you make us an offer!
The landlady grabbed Alisha’s breast with her left hand and squirted a few drops of milk onto the thumbnail of her right hand. She sniffed the milk’s aroma, let out an appreciative whistle, and licked the droplets off her thumbnail.
My best room with full board for a week in exchange for milking her dry once!
Don’t overdo it, Tim laughed. You’re quite greedy.
I run the best place here! the landlady protested, adding mysteriously: Today, I have roast snails. A delicacy! And the other days won’t have anything less!
One breast! Alisha called out, joining the game.
Tim looked at Alisha with laughing eyes but said loudly to the landlady, Oh my, I’d think twice—she’s got bigger shopping to do today.
Deal, the landlady said. It’s settled. But only on the condition that you don’t sell your milk in or around my tavern. That okay?
Alright, Alisha replied.
Why? Alisha asked when the landlady had gone to fetch their food.

Why do you think? She'll sell your milk in the tavern for a fortune.
The landlady returned: Your food will be ready in a few minutes! Turning to Tim, she asked quietly, Say, bailiff, have you been drinking this girl's breastmilk fresh from the breast for weeks?
Yes, Tim smiled.
I'm losing it! the landlady exclaimed, clapping her hands. You must glow in the dark by now. Let me know when you're allowed to screw again. If I get your juice in my loins first, you'll eat free lunch here for a year! Without waiting for a reply, the landlady rushed outside, probably to tell everyone.
Did she guess I'm a witch too? Alisha asked.
In *this* city, that's no issue, Tim said. With the Peri around, visitors like us show up often. Though people still have a ton of respect for us.
You can tell, Alisha commented, pointing outside. Look how they're whispering. But how am I supposed to sell my milk if everyone figures it out right away?
Suppose, Tim said, you're a trader, no witnesses around, and a shady guy pays for ten rolls with three fat gold coins, wanting no change back. You know there was a bank robbery or something. Would you take the gold?
Hm. Tricky. Did I see him rob the bank?
No, you just know he *might* be a bank robber, so the money *might* be dirty.
There'd be two answers: an official one and a secret one.
Just tell me the secret one, Tim grinned.
I think I'd give in. If no one knows…
Exactly the same with your milk: the buyer gets the most precious milk imaginable for next to nothing. No one knows. That's key. And you haven't performed magic to make it obvious you're a witch. If something goes wrong, think of that town we were in. You bolt. Either the easy way, or worst case, you get yanked out. Besides your escape options, the locals would fear you might enchant them. So their zeal will stay manageable. Usually. Don't worry about it. All assuming you don't want to be the openly known witch, revered and feared—that gets old fast, trust me.
It suddenly got loud outside the latticed window separating them from the street. They both looked out curiously. A fight was brewing:
A woman was scolding a man in a green hat: Aren't you ashamed, letting your wife carry the shopping? Her basket must be almost as heavy as a bucket of water. Poor thing!
Another woman chimed in: Can't something be done about it?
The man in the green hat defended himself with a proverb: *If a woman is too proud to live like a woman, let her earn her keep like a man.*
What's wrong with her? another man objected. The man in the green hat replied: She's nagging. Ever since the neighbor got a necklace with a blue gem, she's been hounding me to get her one too. But I'd have to travel far for that. Weeks!

And now her milk's drying up, she's so worked up. I'm too drained to work. So she's got to pitch in, what else can I do?
Another man responded with a proverb: *A woman you milk must be fed.* Why not just get her the necklace? Even a firm promise that she'll get what she wants will fill her breasts again, especially since she'll need to stock you up for the trip. If she really wants it, why not try that?
You milk the woman, not the man, the man in the green hat grumbled, but I'll think it over.
And he walked off with his wife, still not taking her shopping basket.
Alisha laughed. That's how it works here! I bet she'll get her gem.
Tim grumbled: Is it any different in the other world?
Aww, Alisha comforted him, as long as men don't run away, it can't be that bad, and the benefits must outweigh the drawbacks.
True, Tim admitted, but it'd be interesting to know what those benefits are, specifically.
The sex she offers him?
But if she holds it over him?
Then the prospect of eventual sex?
Now that sounds plausible.
I read once, Alisha said, that all animal species with long-term partnerships have ongoing sexuality, not just periodic. It's thought that sex is the actual glue holding partners together, not just for reproduction, as people used to think. They go further: a woman's orgasm is theoretically unnecessary and only makes sense because it motivates her for more sex than needed. To keep the man from running off after fertilization, to protect and provide for her. To bind him to her.
But, Tim objected, isn't that an outdated view?
Alisha shrugged: What's a view? Evolution doesn't rely on state welfare. The drive's been around forever, everywhere, but social systems are recent and not universal. A man who strongly desires his wife is likely the more reliable safety net. Look at how miserable things are in many countries.
Is that some wild backyard theory or actual science?
Actual science. I did a school presentation on it. My dad's a doctor and got me great material. Got an A, so you should consider me an expert.
Tim didn't give up. Still, he said, even if there are tendencies and specializations that differ between men and women, it's hard to see why this binding is necessary.
Because women have babies, except in Peridëis, you sleepyhead. Men don't. It's hard to run with a big belly or a baby at the breast. Neither from a lion nor toward a potential roast. And so on.
I'm an idiot, Tim exclaimed, smacking his head. But suppose both had milk. That's conceivable.

There's still pregnancy.
Suppose women laid eggs, and both could take turns brooding.
Even then, you'd need to bind the partner. The brooding bird needs food, and later, the chicks need protection.
True.
But wouldn't there still be other ways to bind a partner?
Why?
Sorry?
Why? Why other ways when there's one that works well? No offense, but it's not a bad deal to just spread your legs, especially if you enjoy it. It only takes the tiniest bit more for a woman to be not just horny every six months but basically all the time. That way, she enjoys his availability, which he enjoys because she's available. But only if he doesn't bolt after fertilization.
Ugh.
Yeah, ugh, and here we are fooling around without getting pregnant. Where's the motivation then?
For the man, it's simple: he needs the woman's breastmilk to survive, but she needs to get rid of it, which is less existential but still pleasurable. Almost reversed roles.
Still a symbiosis between man and woman, Alisha said. That's what fascinates me so much about Peridëis. It's incredibly arousing for me to have an elixir in my breasts that you need to survive. Something nurturing, protective, even though the man's responsible for provision and protection. A contradiction, yet not a contradiction. It speaks to me as a woman, probably because it satisfies a deep drive without violating another.
I read a saying from some ancient tribe that a man mustn't shed tears except for his wife, Tim said. That's kind of the counterpart for me. I don't take it that literally, but it's an image, a self-image, that's just there, no matter where it comes from, whether it's true or not.
At that moment, the landlady arrived with the food. Reminder: roasted snails. Alisha was a bit thrown that the snails kept trying to reach the salad garnish, but they tasted delicious. And the beer the landlady brought was truly unique. Alisha stuffed herself so much that she willingly let the landlady collect payment.
Pick a breast, Alisha said lazily. No, the landlady replied, I have staff for that.
The staff was a man, clearly a well-paid master of his craft. His skill in milking every last drop from the deepest corners of Alisha's breast was so great that she worried her breasts might grow lopsided. She was honestly tempted to offer her other breast too, but Tim seemed to sense it and stopped her in time.
Come on, Tim said, let's take an evening stroll. It's worth it in this city.
It was worth it! People had brought chairs and tables out of their houses, hung torches on the walls (the kind Alisha already knew), and sat outside chatting.

Most had some kind of display beside them, hoping to sell or at least give something away. What a selection! Since everyone followed their own ideas, nothing was like anything else. Clothes were abundant, musical instruments came in every imaginable form (Tim could only explain some), and food was everywhere. Listing all the artistic, crafted, or culinary offerings would fill pages. Some even offered themselves as slaves for various durations—half an hour, a day, weeks, months.

A unique feature of this city was a (somewhat shady) shop where you could rent flying broomsticks. Tim showed Alisha how it worked, and they flew two or three rounds in the moonlight over the marketplace. It was terribly exhausting but hilarious, especially since Alisha kept tipping off the broom and had to be rescued each time. You had to let one leg dangle straight down, press the instep of the other foot into the back of the dangling leg's knee, and keep both elbows under the broom. Alisha's record was one full round before she gave up. She had no idea how a witch could've flown to the Brocken on a broom. Broom-flying witches must have leather between their legs, muscles in their labia, or be lying through their teeth. The people in the marketplace stood gaping anyway (because Alisha's breasts lifted so nicely during the rapid descents).

There were countless other amusements in the Red Rose City. Food had already been mentioned, a veritable Adonis of a man had (temporarily) satisfied Alisha from behind, there were jugglers' performances, incredible music to which Alisha and Tim danced wildly, massages were available, there was a geyser pool where women frolicked in torchlight, chatting while letting various water jets massage different parts of their bodies, including those that stole one's focus, and: Alisha found a beautiful dress. After long negotiations, she acquired an intricately embroidered dress with copper trim. She especially loved how the dress, through

clever cuts, accentuated her breasts perfectly. Neither her breasts nor the dress dominated; they formed a cohesive whole, like a painting in a fine frame. The milk left in Alisha's breast after all her other small purchases just barely convinced the vendor, but afterward, not a drop more could be coaxed out. She could've waited until tomorrow, but Alisha feared the dress might be sold by then.

Don't complain, Tim commented. Other women might have to deliver their milk daily for weeks. And for once, I don't mind that your breasts are empty. It's about time we head to our lodgings.

Tim carried Alisha's dress (he insisted, citing the crowd), as Alisha didn't want to sweat in her new dress, which she'd wear tomorrow to meet the Peri.

On the way, they witnessed a competition. From what they could tell, couples competed against each other. In short, it was, well, a milking contest. Men had to milk their partner's breast into a spoon and rush the milk to a cup further away, attached to a sort of scale. When the scale tipped, you won. The cup wasn't large, but hindering opponents was allowed, so much milk spilled to the ground amid the crowd's cheers.

What a glorious mess, Alisha commented. There'd be quite a fuss if you pulled this off in the hallway of a maternity ward back home.

Tim laughed. I noticed something else: the couples need to be well in sync—yanking at the breast won't do; after all, it's called *giving milk*, not *taking milk*.

Can a woman completely block her milk flow? Alisha asked.

Tim pondered. I'm not sure. Long-term, maybe. A shock can stop it entirely. Or prudishness. Or danger.

They strolled on. A few corners later, they stumbled upon a performance that intrigued Alisha. It was a large X-shaped wooden frame with a naked man bound standing to it. In front of him, an equally naked, very beautiful woman danced an extraordinarily lascivious dance. Beside the frame stood a man holding a running hourglass aloft in one hand and an expired one in the other. A group of four musicians played rhythmic music. A crowd surrounded the scene, watching.

What's happening here? Alisha asked a spectator.

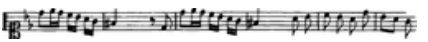
The spectator replied: The beautiful dancer is the prize for the bound man if he can avoid an erection for a full hourglass. If his penis lies as flat as a stick floating on water, the dancer wins, and he loses. She tries to arouse him by all means, but she can't touch him. He has to keep watching her. If he closes his eyes or looks away, the running hourglass doesn't count, and the time starts over. Hence the second hourglass.

What if he loses? Alisha asked.

Nothing, the woman said. It's just exciting, isn't it? Watch how skilled the dancer is. You could learn a lot from her. Those leg movements alone… oh, how I wish I could do that!

Alisha and Tim watched. The beautiful woman won. Both clapped, and Alisha

would've loved to see Tim on the frame, but he pulled her along, laughing.
They saw many more performances, best described as "lust as art." Beautiful dances, some with torches, striptease scenes, even whippings as a dance game, intricate bondage, tender and harsh displays, beautiful things, but also some they didn't care for. Jugglers… one, for instance, carried a woman by having his fist entirely inside her, another woman was bound with ropes until she was gently lifted solely by her breasts. You could get tattoos (they only lasted a while, Tim explained), piercings, or rings (also temporary, Tim said). There were artfully painted naked women, milk sculptures, another milking contest where men had to milk their opponent's partner. Alisha found that idea intriguing, as the man's aggression and the woman's defense made for a dynamic team.
Alisha eventually found a wonderful tavern on a slight hill with excellent food and beer. It was packed, but she offered her remaining milk for two seats, allowing them to finally rest their aching legs and enjoy the vibrant scene from above with food and drink. Oh, there was so much more to see… The streets, alleys, and squares buzzed with people, and no one seemed to want to stay indoors. It was an exhausting but beautiful evening.
Late at night, back at the tavern, Tim and Alisha barely managed the stairs to their room, undressed, emptied their bladders, and collapsed into bed.
It didn't matter that Alisha's breasts were emptier than ever; Tim was asleep instantly.
The day had perhaps been a bit too much at once.



The Great Peri

Alisha and Tim stood before the Peri's castle, which from a distance had looked like a fortress in the center of the Red Rose City. Up close, the castle was strikingly pretty, though laughably small. Its crenelated walls were built from yellow and red stone blocks, with a differently designed and variably tall tower every few meters, each topped with a bailiff standing guard. "Standing guard" was a generous term, as they were all slacking in various ways. Some chatted, others picked their noses, some read books (!), others leaned halfway toward the city, flirting with the town's women. One even had a girl in his tower, enjoying her in what was likely an unauthorized manner. From behind. Since the girl was conveniently leaning out over the wall toward the city, Tim seized the chance and shouted:
Hey, girl! When does the gate open?
I—don't—know—ex-actly—aa-aaah. The thrusts from behind clearly hindered not just her voice but her wits. Her massive breasts swung so much you couldn't

look away.
Look away, Alisha said. You won't get a sensible answer from her anyway.
Tim looked again, just to be sure, in case a sensible answer might come. Nothing.
They returned to the gate.
The gate was closed.
No bell here, banging on the gate won't help—we need to shout, Tim said.
Helloooo!
They waited. Nothing. But a woman's rhythmic moaning could be heard. Here too!
I sense trouble, Tim said. Then he shouted loudly:
Hellllllooooo!
Even shouting together did nothing.
Tim looked for stones to throw over the wall. Not a single one was to be found. Not even other throwable objects. Others had probably had the same idea.
While Tim puzzled over what to do, Alisha approached the gate.
Hey, she said over her shoulder, why do you think they put this box of stones here?
Are you pulling my leg? Tim asked, stunned.
No. *Honestly* not!
Tim stepped closer, amazed. That's new, he said. This box wasn't here before.
The box was full of stones, perfectly sized for throwing. Tim took a few and stepped back. He threw the first stone over the wall, then the second, third, fourth… Alisha kept bringing him more.
Eventually, a voice cried from the wall: Ouch! A bailiff's head appeared between the crenels. What do you want? he shouted.
We want in! Tim shouted back. To the Great Peri!
Give me five minutes! Five minutes! the bailiff called, looking genuinely desperate.
We can wait that long, Tim shouted back.
Alisha giggled.
The woman's rhythmic moaning resumed.
Say, Alisha asked, they don't seem to stick to celibacy, do they?
Those with women are volunteers, Tim replied. I think! You only get mandatory service with celibacy if you're caught as an unwanted intruder. Whether you continue voluntarily without celibacy afterward is your choice. But some bailiffs never did mandatory service.
The Peri's probably fed up with the loose lifestyle her bailiffs lead, Alisha laughed.
They waited not five but fifteen minutes before the gate finally opened.
Thanks, the gatekeeper said. You're a really considerate guy.
A giggling naked woman, dress tucked under her arm, darted past them, blowing

the gatekeeper a kiss as she ran.
Shh—don't rat me out, the gatekeeper said to Alisha. Technically, we're not allowed to fool around with girls during watch. But she was so cute, how could I say no? Did you see her perky little…
That's enough, Tim laughed. Let us in already.
The gatekeeper let them through. Alisha and Tim entered a large, vaulted passageway built, like the outer walls, from yellow and red stone blocks. The floor was fully paved with azure stones. The ceiling seemed to be a single sheet of yellow glass. At the end of the wide passage, an equally wide staircase led upward.
They were finally here.
Alisha's heart pounded with excitement.
What did you want again? the gatekeeper asked.
To HER, Tim said.
Never go to the Peri - except she needs it very![72] the gatekeeper admonished.
Very funny. - She called us herself - she needs our services. Very!
That's a different matter, of course, the gatekeeper said. Alright, I'll announce you both, and you'll get ready for the audience in the meantime. You know: *properly* wash, *properly* comb your hair, *properly* tidy your clothes! The gatekeeper gave them a stern look.
Yes, I know, Tim grumbled.
Alisha raised her eyebrows but said nothing.
The gatekeeper disappeared.
I feel like a little girl in kindergarten, Alisha whispered.
That's exactly the right mindset, Tim whispered back. That's about what we are now. Come on! *Properly* wash.
Tim pulled Alisha through a door, down a short passage, into a small room. A very pretty little room. There stood seven beautiful, completely naked women, all looking identical, who received them.
What do I do now? Alisha asked.
Let them *properly* wash you, Tim said.
Alisha let it happen. The seven identical, beautiful, naked women each made an identical curtsy, then swirled around Alisha and Tim. They stripped off their clothes until both stood naked in the room. Then the seven identical, beautiful, naked women brought buckets of warm water, *properly* washed their hair, *properly* scrubbed every inch of their bodies, leaving no spot untouched—not even the private ones. Alisha noted with some skepticism that Tim's member had

72 He is not entirely wrong, compare Brothers Grimm in Grimm's Fairy Tale 94: "The Peasant's Wise Daughter", Aarne-Thompson type 875 "The Clever Farmgirl" and note the German proverb, a rhyme: "Gehe nie zu deinem Fürst, wenn du nicht gerufen wirst!" (literally: „Never go to your prince unless you are called!")

risen. *Properly*. She grew even more skeptical when one of the seven identical, beautiful, naked women carefully pulled back Tim's foreskin to gently clean underneath. Unnecessarily *proper*, Alisha thought, but at least the woman eventually let go of Tim's member.
Alisha, too, was *properly* cleaned everywhere and had to admit that, done this way, it felt quite pleasant.
In the end, they were dried off, *properly* combed, and their clothes were returned, dusted and *properly* cleaned, as was evident from Tim's uniform. Finally, the seven beautiful, naked women made seven deep curtsies and scurried off. Alisha felt comfortable in her skin. She asked aloud, Is it always like this here?
Always, Tim confirmed. No one is admitted dirty.
What do I need to watch out for now? Alisha asked as they stood back in the passage.
Nothing, Tim said. There's hardly any etiquette. Now comes the audience with the Great Peri. She's the highest of all Peris, though the others are her equals. Each has her own land, but this one also handles matters concerning the outside world, the other side. She's the one who gave me the chance to prove myself as a bailiff to earn permanent residency. And she's the one who chose you for Peridëis.
What?! How does the Peri know me? Alisha marveled.
I don't know, Tim said. Just ask her. You're allowed. When you face a Peri, make the usual curtsy all women do here, then wait to be addressed. You don't need to lower your head or anything. Just be yourself. Ready?
I need to pee first.
Back to where we were, door on the right. Be extra thorough cleaning yourself. I'll wait here.
When Alisha returned from the toilet (another with natural water flushing—how did they do it? Cleaning was a breeze), the gatekeeper was already waiting with the boy and led them to a staircase at the end of the passage. Are you ready? he asked quietly.
Yes, Alisha and Tim whispered in unison.
The gatekeeper called out loudly: The Great Peri awaits Witch Alisha and the bailiff assigned to escort her!
Tim took Alisha's hand, and together they ascended the wide staircase at the end of the passage.
There was no door or gate at the top. Right beyond the wide staircase, a light-flooded room opened up, with a throne at its far end. On the throne sat the Great Peri in a long white dress.

The path to the Great Peri was lined on both sides by a row of beautiful, identical women, each (in the same way) lifting and presenting their breasts with their hands, as Alisha knew from countless drawings. Their long (all identical) dresses left their (all identically emphasized) pubic areas exposed. All these women stood (in the same way) still, not blinking (in the same way) as they cast smoldering glances. It had style. How was Tim faring? Did these beautiful (all identically provocative) women affect him? Their posture, gestures, and looks were man-devouring! Alisha had to force herself not to glance down at Tim's penis.

The beautiful (all identically provocative) women were like a guard of honor for the throne. Sultans could take notes, Alisha thought. Two men with sabers behind the throne would suffice as real guards; more would be decorative. For that, half-naked beautiful women were the better choice—plus, they could yank out an assassin's hair by the handful while twenty saber-wielding guards would only hack each other to bits in the fray.

Speaking of bits. Should she risk a glance at Tim's best bit?

Keep your thoughts in check, Alisha told herself. You're before the Great Peri. Her throat tightened. Thank goodness Tim held her hand firmly and pulled her along. Without him, her knees would've buckled.

The room wasn't very large, so Alisha didn't have much time to study the Great Peri closely. What perfectly even blonde hair! What full, pert breasts! And how majestically her nipples protruded, with such enticingly textured, well-defined areolas! What a beauty! Yet how cool she seemed! How commanding!

Moments later, they stood directly before the Peri. Her blue eyes were mesmerizing.

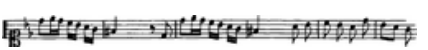
Alisha performed a curtsy, lifting her dress slightly as prescribed. Thank goodness etiquette called for a simple curtsy; the Peri sat with legs spread, her skirt pulled back, displaying her (perfect!) slightly parted vulva. A deep court curtsy would've looked like Alisha was about to kiss the Peri's privates. That was probably

too much, even for Peridëis, though the throne looked suspiciously multifunctional.
Tim bowed his head before the Peri.
The Great Peri stood, raised her wand, and… and…
Damn, the Peri said, why does this blasted thing never work when I need it?
Did you forget to turn the wand on? Tim asked.
Alisha nearly fainted. "Culture shock" barely described what she was experiencing.
Suddenly, a thunderclap echoed. The entire throne room lit up in the most beautiful azure blue. Azure and gold. It was a dreamy sight. And the Peri, all in white, within it. Alisha's mouth fell open again.
Can't this tech stuff work *just once* as it should? the Peri asked, exasperated.
It did, Tim said.
It didn't, the Peri grumbled. That stupid switch ruined the whole effect! Come here, both of you, she continued. How did it go? You first, Alisha!
The Peri knew her name! She seemed a bit cool and aloof to Alisha (and indescribably beautiful!), yet also like a capable, fair boss who didn't need to pressure her subordinates. Her authority was simply palpable. And that, even as she spread her legs wider—Alisha could, as they say, see deep into her paradise. The Peri's aura of power combined with her incredible eroticism must be devastating for a man prone to sexual submission.
Alisha shared her impressions, expressed her enthusiasm, and above all, declared her love for Peridëis. She asked how she, of all people, had the great fortune to be chosen for Peridëis. Her passion must have come across as genuine, as the Peri even smiled slightly.
Well, the Peri answered Alisha's question, there was a woman in your family who chose to live her life in the other world by her husband's side. You're taking her place. That's not always a reason, but it's how someone noticed you. And since you have qualities that fit well—your own ideas, fantasies, dreams—you were chosen. Don't think this happens often. Did this interesting bailiff hint at what your task will be?
Alisha wanted to know more but didn't dare ask. Regarding the task, she glanced uncertainly at Tim. He gave her an encouraging smile.
Y-yeah, she stammered. He said I'd have to carry out tasks for you sometimes, and in return, I can live in Peridëis.
You bring another contribution to Peridëis—yourself and your dreams, the Peri said. But as for the tasks: yes, your bailiff got that right. Tasks in Peridëis and, at least initially, in the outside world. I don't go out there myself—it costs me lifespan—and here, I can't handle everything alone. Are you ready to take on such tasks?
Alisha nodded eagerly. Yes! she said. I am.

Good to hear, the Peri replied. No one's ever answered differently.
The Peri turned to Tim. Now you tell me!
Tim summarized the experiences Alisha cherished in a few words but reported in great detail about Captain Prillwitz and the ZPKK comrade.
The Peri frowned. I already know about this ZPKK comrade, she said. She seems to have found her fulfillment and, as far as I know, has no wishes beyond what she's already found. But I don't like what this Captain Prillwitz is up to. Come back tomorrow to receive your task.
They were dismissed. Alisha curtsied, Tim bowed his head, and they walked back through the long throne room, passing the beautiful, identical naked women who (all in the same way) didn't blink and offered their breasts with their hands (all in the same way), until they reached the staircase, descended, and were back below.
Alisha took a deep breath, but Tim covered her mouth. Not here, he whispered.
They returned to the castle gate.
How do we get back in tomorrow? Tim asked the guard loudly.
Bring me a girl? the guard asked.
And who does the work for the girl? Tim shot back. She's got to live too.
Want in or not? the guard asked slyly.
We'll bring you a girl! Alisha answered for Tim.
He grumbled but didn't object.
Outside, Tim said to Alisha: With bad luck, I'll have to haul stuff back and forth for an hour because of that. Did you consider that? If I throw a pile of stones over the wall instead, we might be quicker.
I'll generously sacrifice myself, Alisha replied. I'll take care of him so it only takes five minutes, and he's not bad-looking. Don't say no—I'm terribly under-supplied and promise to think of you the whole time.
Fine, we'll do it, Tim said. He's not a bad guy, he's nice and capable. But on another note—you wanted to ask something?
Yes! Why doesn't the Peri have guards? Were those women just decoration?
No, they *are* her guards. A woman they'd overpower anyway, at least by sheer numbers, and men would be ridden to ruin until they're gasping their last. Female weapons! Don't forget where you are.
Alisha collapsed in roaring laughter. That works?
Like a charm! Tim said grimly. But I've got other ideas for now.
What?
The lake has a nice little beach inside the city, and you can swim.
They ran hand in hand, and minutes later, they were in the water. Wonderful! Alisha exclaimed.
Tim downplayed it: Outside the city, there are proper big beaches. With palms, banana groves behind, the works. But the city beach is quicker to reach.
Alisha saw a small boat leaving the shore and asked, Can you go boating here

too?
No, Tim replied. In the middle of this lake is the forbidden island. No one's allowed near it. It's reserved for the Peris alone. Even we can't go there.
What's on the island? And what's that boat for?
They say there's a kind of sanctuary on the island. But no one knows. Or maybe the Peris just want peace, a sort of privacy, whatever that means. That's what we visitors think. The regular folks of Peridëis fear the island and tell the wildest horror stories about it. Anyway, no one goes there. The boat delivers breastmilk from the Peris to the island once a week. But what happens with the breastmilk, no one knows.
Isn't anyone curious?
You know, Tim said, the locals really aren't—they fear the Peris and even more the island. And visitors, the witches, have more than enough to do without it. Otherwise, it's… accepted as the Peris' private domain. Though there are rumors that all eleven Peris gather there sometimes. Remember that little story you were sent back home?
Of course!
Well, the man mentioned there, the creator of Peridëis, is said to be there. Supposedly resting in the great mountain from the story. If that's true, no matter what you think Peridëis is, going there risks your residency here. And if your time in the other world is almost up, that means death soon after. If you're religious, it's God, or at least *a* god, depending on your faith. If you believe in magic, it's a supreme sorcerer. If you believe in technology, it's tech we can't even begin to grasp. But in any case, it's something we're a tiny flicker against, better kept clear of the storm. Don't look so scared—it's not threatening, more like a hot stove a child's warned not to touch, though it keeps them warm otherwise. Nothing more. You're still looking scared! Alright, it's your mom's drawer of love letters from her youth. And if you go poking in there, you're in *big* trouble with Mom!
Alisha laughed.

Now we're taking a little excursion, Tim said.
Where to?
Wait and see.
Alisha and Tim walked through some alleys until they reached the city wall, this time from the inside. Built right against the gleaming golden wall was a house, apparently a tavern.
Here we go, Tim said.
This is the excursion? Alisha wondered.
Wait and see. Tim laughed.



The Fritzen Tavern

The tavern had a bronze door adorned with carvings of the stylized woman offering her breasts with her hands, which Alisha recognized. Tim opened the bronze door and ushered Alisha inside.
Alisha saw an ordinary tavern with a bar and tables, but the bar was empty, and no one sat at the tables. The entire floor was laid with gleaming golden stones. Alisha didn't need to guess—it was fool's gold. At the back, a fool's gold staircase led to the cellar, from where the noise of many people drifted up. The main rooms were evidently underground. Alisha and Tim headed toward the fool's gold staircase and descended.

Below, a large, irregularly shaped natural stone vault opened up, made of yellow-ochre speckled stone, with beautiful fool's gold crystals sparkling in numerous spots. The vault was many times larger than the small tavern house above suggested. The rock walls had countless niches, some larger, some smaller, some furnished with stone benches and tables. In one particularly large but shallow niche, Alisha saw a fresco carved into the wall, depicting the same stylized woman holding out her breasts, her lower body shaped like an O. The walls were hung with numerous oil paintings of Peridëis: fantastical landscapes Alisha knew, depictions of unfamiliar small towns with strange houses, people in even stranger clothing (women, naturally, bare-breasted), and interspersed among them, portrayals of various sexual acts, many of which Alisha had already seen. How incredibly diverse human sexuality was! Yet some of these acts would land you behind bars in certain countries in the other world. Everywhere were wooden tables and benches, some with bronze fittings, some without, all richly carved with intricate designs.
And, of course, there were guests in the vaulted rooms of the tavern. Someone had to be making all that noise.
The moment they descended the stairs, all conversation ceased, the room fell silent, and everyone stood up.
Alisha's face turned beet red, as all eyes were on *her*.
Tim laughed at her flushed face, raised her arm, and called out loudly: Don't stare! This is Alisha. By the wish and order of the Great Peri, she's one of us now.
A wave of clapping, whistling, and cheering erupted from the crowd. Alisha couldn't tell how many there were, as the room was labyrinthine, with more rooms branching off. A full-bearded man with shoulder-length white hair approached, gripped Alisha firmly by both shoulders, and said in a booming voice:
Welcome to Peridëis! Of course, the folks here weren't rudely staring at your face—they were just checking if you've got good breasts.

He laughed heartily, Alisha turned even redder, but somehow the man had defused the situation. The crowd cheered and clapped again, raising their glasses —colorful glasses in all hues, not mere mugs.
It's not every day, the man continued, that the Peris officially bring someone from our corner of the world to Peridëis. The rest of us sneaked in and got rehabilitated. He winked. You know, three years of endurance.
Now it was Tim's turn to squirm. Alisha giggled. The hint was clear.
The man went on: If you have any questions about Peridëis, need help, or just want to chat and unwind, come to this tavern. Here, we're among ourselves. No locals, no Peris. Think of the tavern as a little home for you. It's called "To the Old Fritz," or just the Fritzen Tavern. That should clue you in on who you'll meet: once folks from every region where German is spoken, now, for practical reasons, mostly from the GDR. But we've got West Berliners who "informally extend" their day passes[73], and spry old Berliners who, by all rights, should've been dead ages ago.
They…
You!
You… mean there are people here a hundred years old or older?
What, you didn't know?
I did, but I've never knowingly met one.
A young woman, maybe Alisha's age, pushed through the crowd: That'd be me, if you please. Born 1896. Skipped out of the other world when they started that world war.
Really?! You've lived that loooong? You look so young!
Thanks, but there are way older hags here than me.
And you've never gone back to the other world since?
Just at the start, a little, briefly. It was nicer here, and besides, they wanted to nab me for indecency.
What did you do?
Hold it, the bearded man growled. I don't want to hear that story for the thousandth time. Find a table and stop standing around awkwardly.
Philistine! the girl shouted at the man, waving Alisha to follow her.
Wait, Tim laughed. I don't want to hear it for the thousandth time either and would like a break for a beer or two. May I?
Granted! Alisha replied.
Then you go alone, the girl said. Makes you wonder why men even have ears. Certainly not for listening to women. And she pulled Alisha away.
Alisha liked the tavern and felt at ease. As they walked through, she looked around. Without exception, all the women here wore dresses that left their breasts

73 West Berliners could visit East Berlin until the Wall fell with a day visa, valid only until midnight of the same day.

completely bare, in many variations. What did these women look like back home? The girl leading her had nothing about her that hinted at her origins. Then it hit Alisha: Right! You arrive here as you'd be without styling, makeup, and so on. It'd be quite a shock to see some of these people as neighbors, colleagues, or whatever back home. The thought that she might run into them on the street there made her uneasy. The safety of not knowing anyone in Peridëis had made it so easy to let go, be relaxed, indulge, and enjoy showing off her body—especially her always-bare breasts, full of milk, not like Greek statues. How did the other women act? Clearly relaxed, uninhibited. That reassured Alisha. The fact that every woman proudly displayed her more-or-less milk-laden breasts was like a signal. And their outfits too—no trace of GDR dreariness, which only spared homemade clothes. Everything Alisha saw was consistently creative. One woman wore black leather with straps encircling her bare breasts; another had a clever variation of a cut-out Rococo dress; yet another wore a shirt with artful openings for her breasts to peek through, her legs bare up to her buttocks. Another was dressed like a rustic carpenter, her flat breasts—betrayed only by large, furrowed areolas and a gentle curve—peeking out from a carpenter's vest. She gave Alisha a cheerful grin and winked: Fancy trying a woman sometime? Alisha laughed back. Here, it didn't feel out of place; it was part of the vibe. Loose behavior, like the loose clothing. Clothing in Peridëis was wildly varied anyway. Each region they'd passed had a shared style, but here it was a riot of diversity. Alisha particularly noticed women who left their crotches exposed in intriguing ways—she'd have to remember those. Peridëis was full of inventive ideas for keeping pleasure organs invitingly accessible.

Like in the first tavern, Alisha saw chairs at the back that looked suspiciously like gynecological exam chairs, leaving no ambiguity about the dress code. It felt like they'd gathered everything the land offered in inventions and creative art, as if this were a tourism center showcasing a country's highlights—not to give a realistic picture, as that's not what tourism centers do, but to paint an idealized, vibrant, juicy image that sparks desire. That's how Alisha would describe the tavern's setup. Back to those peculiar furnishings: there was everything you could imagine to position or hold a woman or man—sitting, hanging, lying—for all sorts of… play. "Play" was the best word. With each other, giving and taking. These chairs, couches, frames, nets, tables, and more were a feast of ingenious craftsmanship and decoration, in wood, leather, and bronze, all exquisitely designed. This was a place of unrestrained lust, breaking free from the weight of suppression. That was true for all of Peridëis, but here it was intensely concentrated.

The people too. Aside from their wildly varied clothing, they weren't much different from those elsewhere in the land. In towns, Alisha had often seen women with fingers in their laps while chatting with tablemates, or men with

hands on women's breasts to stimulate milk flow, if they weren't outright milking them into a cup. Or women applying skin cream, the key being its freshness. Just examples, of course.
Most men in the tavern were far less revealingly dressed than the women, as Alisha had noticed throughout the land. Maybe one in five had their genitals or buttocks fully exposed, but their clothing was still unusual, fantastical, and somehow sexy. There were also fully naked men, clad only in leather strap harnesses.

The woman pulling Alisha along turned: What do you think of that spot back there? At the far end, some tables were free, offering a good view of the tavern. Alisha liked it.
Like it? I'm Clara, the woman said. Hungry? Thirsty?
I'd love a drink. And food… what's on offer?
Something proper from home?
Absolutely.
After much back-and-forth, Alisha ended up with a plain pork roast, potatoes, gravy, and coleslaw. It had to be done. You couldn't always eat fancy stuff. She craved something ordinary. But the gravy turned out too good. At school, the always identical-tasting sauce was completely different, and the students had joked that it was delivered via the RGW sauce pipeline[74]. Besides the food, Clara grabbed a mineral water from the bar. Best for thirst, she commented. The other seventeen thousand drinks (per Clara), Alisha should try later.
Alisha sipped her glass while eating and found the mineral water excellent.
When Alisha finished, Clara, who'd barely held back, finally asked: So, what's Peridëis like? Knocks you out, doesn't it?
Yes! I never dreamed I'd get to know something so beautiful.
Don't play coy—when the maiden falls, it's usually on her back. You're not pinching your thighs shut just because your fine bailiff can't, are you?!
Alisha blushed: No, I'm definitely getting…
There you go! It's not healthy otherwise. Like my old landlady, she…
Hold on, hold on, Alisha laughed. Want to tell it in order? Start with where you're from, and what was that about indecency?
You're right, Clara said. Alright, here goes. Like you, I was chosen by the Peris, true Peridëis nobility, didn't sneak in. My parents died without marrying me off. No condolences—it was ages ago. Being young, single, and alone was considered indecent back then, at least in finer circles. Though in Berlin, even then, you could find just about anything. At first, it was dull, alone in that big apartment,

74 RGW: Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, a socialist counterpart to the Western European Community. "Soßenverbundleitung"=Sauce compound line alludes to socialist mega-projects involving oil and gas.

but a reliable peddler brought me certain French bedroom literature that described thrilling things in such detail you couldn't help but take practical breaks to… relieve yourself to keep reading. I devoured that smut, though some were good books too. I mention this so you know the mood I was in during the few months between my parents' death and my first trip to Peridëis. One day, I read in the paper about a scandal over a book called *Glücksehe*, Marriage of Happiness[75]. The bombshell was that a husband should suckle at his wife's breast; with regular suckling, milk would flow without prior pregnancy. Above all, her period would stop. The author, a certain Mr. Buttenstedt, wanted to use this to prevent unwanted pregnancies. In those days! You can't imagine the uproar. Some spat venom, crying Sodom and Gomorrah, but others calmly confirmed it worked. Buttenstedt ended up in court for indecency but was acquitted. Avoiding unwanted pregnancies wasn't my issue—not yet—but the idea that breasts could produce milk permanently, pregnant or not, electrified me. That was my thing, you know? It struck deep roots inside me. Even now, my breasts tingle just thinking back. I might've become a wet nurse if I hadn't been a wealthy burgher's daughter. Above all, Buttenstedt's idea held a difference—giving milk without maternal duties meant not suppressing feelings. With or without a man. I had to have that book, whatever the cost, and it wasn't cheap. My peddler[76] couldn't get it. I had to order it officially by letter and sign a pledge to keep its contents secret. That was fine. The catch was, it was only sold to married women. So I cheekily ordered as "Mrs." instead of "Miss," which later got me in trouble, but that's beside the point. I got the book and devoured it the moment it arrived. I even took notes on key parts. The gist is simple—I know the text by heart. Want to hear it?
Yes.
It goes:

The milk must be sucked 3 to 4 times daily, 5 to 10 minutes for each breast, and under normal conditions milk will be obtained in from 3 to 30 days. If the man now drinks up the milk daily so often as the breasts are full, the woman's menstruation ceases, and from that time the sexual act can be practised without conception following; so long as the milk is regularly drunk up, the sexual life can be led without care on that point. To suck only twice a day is not often enough, the interval between is too long. The sucking gives to both sides, but especially to the woman, the highest sexual pleasure; that has also been intended by nature.

75 Carl Buttenstedt: Die Glücks-Ehe: Die Offenbarung im Weibe – eine Naturstudie. Berlin about 1902. English 1930: The Marriage of Happiness (The Revelation of Woman) - a Study in Nature. Translation by Maud Parlow-Hutchinson.

76 Colporteur: Itinerant bookseller. Often, serialized novels were sold as cheap booklets, but also news and uplifting writings for the soul (openly) or body (secretly).

Man saugt täglich 3 bis 4 Mal, je 5—10 Minuten an jeder Bruſt ſeiner Frau, dann wird bei normalen Verhältniſſen in 3—30 Tagen Milch erzielt werden. Trinkt der Mann nun die Milch weiter täglich ſo oft ab, als die Brüſte voll ſind, dann verliert die Frau ihre Periode und von dieſem Zeitpunkte kann man den Geſchlechtsakt vollziehen ohne daß Empfängnis eintritt und trinkt man nun täglich weiter die Milch ab, ſo kann man geſchlechtlich auch unbeſorgt weiter leben wie bisher. —

Bei dem Saugen haben beide Gatten, beſonders aber die Frau, ein hohes geſchlechtliches Wohlgefühl, und das iſt auch von der Natur beabſichtigt.

The highest sexual pleasure, what a thrill just to read that! (Clara laughed.) And when a man gets under your skirts, it's the same—pleasure first, no chores after. The rest of the book didn't matter to me. Some people wrote they succeeded, you know, with the milk, which was fascinating to read. Others had no luck saving on chores, which I took as a dire warning. But mainly, Mr. Buttenstedt had this wild idea that couples could become immortal through it. That's why I later suspected he'd caught wind of Peridëis and spun his theory from it. Who knows, though—Peridëis wasn't mentioned, and the immortality was supposed to come from some fluid exchange between man and woman. Milk one way, semen the other. I heard later the Chinese had this idea a thousand years ago. Whatever. My practical problem was I had no man to suckle at my breast. I couldn't reach with my mouth—my breasts were too small. So I got a little glass milk pump with a rubber bulb *for a friend*. It was interesting but didn't work; I just got hand cramps. Then I got a pump with a suction hose. That felt very interesting but produced no milk either. Finally, I read about another book, pompously titled *A New Revelation of Nature* by a Mr. Funcke. I'd never have known it if Buttenstedt hadn't condemned it as plagiarism, though it wasn't. Besides more silly stuff, that book had a better trick for me: a special breast massage. To my endless joy, it coaxed the first drops of milk from my breast. The author wrote: *You shall let your life force flow in the form of milk from your breasts for the benefit and pleasure of others.* You can laugh, but for me, it was a revelation. Funcke's massage idea was also known in China long ago, I heard later. But it worked, and I increased my milk by massaging regularly.

How did you manage that with work? Alisha asked.

Work? Me? As a lady of my standing, you didn't work. The man did, and the woman stayed home, bullying the maids. I had enough money, read, went to the opera, concerts, and theater, made refined conversation with girlfriends, and cautiously sniffed out their recommendations for a suitable husband. He had to be perfect for me, wealthy, educated, handsome, and a bunch of other things that, all

together, were impossible to find.
Alisha laughed.
In short, I wanted it all, and the problem is, the good men get snapped up eventually. Another book suggested inducing milk through hypnosis, but by then, I'd already succeeded, thankfully. My new problem was the police taking an interest in me. They had nothing on me, but it was very unpleasant. Who wants to show up at the station for embarrassing questions? I suspected my landlady, a spiteful hag whose husband hadn't serviced her in ages. She'd made snide remarks about marrying already and had a key to my apartment. And sure enough, she'd been in there while I was out, that's certain. Good thing I kept my bedroom literature locked away.
And then?
One day, by some mysterious stroke of luck, I got a thick envelope with a small leather-bound book inside.
Just like me! Alisha exclaimed excitedly.
Clara smiled: Only I didn't have to travel as far as you. Some train, some horse-drawn cab, some walking. And later, right in Berlin. But you know what, this is a good moment to call your bailiff. You'll see. He'll want to show you something now.
Clara pulled Alisha to the bar and made sure Tim was summoned. When he arrived, Clara whispered to Alisha: We'll definitely meet again. You've only heard my story *once*. And hold on to your bailiff—he's a fine specimen! A woman wants a man, not a warmed-up corpse. She winked and vanished.

So, Tim said, was it interesting?
Very! Alisha exclaimed.
For me too. The first time. And the second, and the third.
Alisha laughed and gave him a playful smack on the rear.
Assault on state authority! he cried. Speaking of authority, here's the promised surprise. Come on!
Alisha followed Tim curiously.
They walked through the tavern's rooms to a heavy, wide wooden door. Behind it, a staircase led deeper underground. Torches hung on the walls to the left and right. Alisha and Tim descended.
At the bottom, an underground passage stretched out. About fifty meters later, they stood before another large wooden door. Tim opened it and let Alisha enter. They were in a simple cave with a sort of altar in the center, built from bricks.
A transition! Alisha exclaimed.
Exactly, Tim said. This time, I go first, you follow. Pay attention. This is just a quick detour. I only want to show you the transition, but we'll return to Peridëis. Your journey back will be through another transition. But you should see this one

at least once.
What kind of transition is it?
You'll see!
Alright. What about my dress?
Take it off.
And where do I put it?
Just leave it.
Are you nuts? I'm not leaving my dress on the floor.
Tim groaned. Fine, fine, fold it neatly.
And then?
Put it on the floor.
That's hardly better.
So what? Even if someone comes, what's the big deal?
But…
Please, please. Otherwise, we'd have to go back and undress in the tavern. I just didn't think of it.
Alisha relented.

After Alisha passed through the altar back to the other world, she found herself in a sort of large vaulted cellar, lined everywhere with yellow bricks and topped with a barrel vault of yellow clinkers. Simple, meticulously masoned, and quite pretty. And, as expected, there was the stylized woman again, her legs forming a large "O" and her breasts offered to the viewer. For instance, she was faintly embossed into the yellow clinker floor, with multiple clinkers arranged to form her symbol.
The altar table was set in a vaulted niche this time, and the obligatory bathing area resembled a large swimming pool, interrupted by yellow clinker columns. You could swim between them. The water was crystal clear, revealing the spotless clinker floor beneath. A slight current stirred the water, and a strong rushing sound came from further away. The air was dry at first, but as Alisha walked further, the damp air hinted at a nearby waterfall or something similar.
Tim had greeted Alisha in the transition space and took the lead. At her request, they first checked the source of the water sound. It was indeed a kind of waterfall. The water fell from just a meter high but spanned a uniform width of at least thirty or forty meters into the pool. Above, the water was only a few centimeters deep, but the breadth made up for it. The channel feeding the water was about two meters high, fully lined with yellow clinker bricks, and, interrupted only by supports, seemed to maintain its full width far into the distance. Everything was pristine, undamaged, with the clinkers masoned at precise, even intervals.
Once they'd seen enough, they walked back around the pool. Just behind it was the niche leading to the other world. Here, the air was suddenly dry again. Before

them stood a sort of arched doorway framed by yellow clinker bricks. Inside the arch, the familiar stylized woman was depicted, this time in a deeply embossed clinker relief.
I absolutely have to go first, Tim said. I need to check if the coast is clear. Wait here. If everything's fine, I'll come back and let you know.
And if not?
Not likely. If I'm not back in half an hour against all odds, return to the tavern and pass the time there. But I'll probably be back in three or four minutes.
Tim vanished through the relief in the wall.

And sure enough, in less than two minutes, Tim was back. All clear! he said. I'll go first; you count slowly to twenty, then follow. Got it?
Got it!
Tim disappeared again. Alisha counted aloud to twenty, then followed.
Swirling red liquid, strange muffled sounds, Alisha pushed forward, and then she was through.
Whoa!
It was just a cluttered cellar, nothing more. A cool cellar.
Tim stood before her with a flashlight, laughing. Here, he said, at least put on some slippers.
Where are we? And why's it so cold?
Wait and see! Tim pulled Alisha through a cellar with bricked-up light shafts into an underground passage. First, they descended a steep old brick staircase, then entered a masoned tunnel with a rounded ceiling. The plaster on the walls was crumbling, but the floor was fairly clean. Iron railings ran along both sides.
Just follow me, Tim said, and keep your voice low, just to be safe.
An open, old-style steel door interrupted the passage, but it continued. A turn, bricked-up entrances, another turn, and another open steel door. Still, it went on. After a third steel door, they reached another staircase, this time leading up. Finally, a last steel door, and the air turned musty-warm. They stood in a cobweb-draped cellar with empty beer crates, old chairs, tables, and other junk. Tim pulled Alisha to a barred cellar window, half above ground, made of square panes, at least half of them broken. Alisha looked out. Gray apartment blocks. A street. Streetlights. Cars. Trabant! Wartburg! Moskvich! Polski Fiat! Lada! Škoda!
No way! Alisha whispered. We're in the GDR?
Yep. Let's see if you can guess where.
Berlin?
Yes.
Hm. Less city district Mitte, more Friedrichshain, Prenzlauer Berg, or something.

Bullseye! Prenzlauer Berg! Tim told Alisha the address[77].
So I could just stroll out and be home in no time?
No.
Why not?
Naked as you are, the next policeman would ask for your ID.
Alisha giggled.
No, Tim said, you have to return the expected way, and no one here must see you before then. But I'll show you a bit more. Above us is a grimy little bar. I checked —it's closing time, so we're safe. The barkeep is one of us, so no need to be shy around him. But with the patrons, you never know.
Tim opened a door and went ahead. Alisha followed, and Tim closed the door behind them. "Storage" was written on it.
This door only opens if you lift it slightly by the handle, Tim said. Try it.
Alisha pressed the handle and tugged. It seemed locked tight. Then she gripped the handle with both hands and lifted. The door rose two centimeters effortlessly and opened easily in that position.
Little trick against strays, Tim said. Otherwise, down here are storage rooms and the bar's toilets, so you can slip downstairs unnoticed.
Aha! Alisha saw the doors. And a staircase leading up.
Tim climbed the stairs, and Alisha followed. At the top was a small landing. A narrow door likely led to a broom closet, a larger one probably to the stairwell, and an open door led to the taproom. It was empty, lights off. Good thing, since both Tim and Alisha were stark naked.
The taproom was hideously ugly, reeking of beer and stale cigarette smoke. A counter, drab tables and chairs, white walls, neon lights on the ceiling, one window draped with curtains that were probably yellow and sticky. Alisha shuddered.
Disgusting bar, she said.
Exactly right, Tim said. The regulars are always drunk and notice nothing, but an observer sticks out immediately. The side door by the stairs isn't locked during opening hours, and outside hours, you can at least get out. Snap lock. If you don't drink, leave the barkeep a mark or so to cover his costs. He's a decent guy, not getting rich off this place. The exit through the hallway leads to the street, or via the backyards to other buildings. Use that to stay as discreet as possible.
Brilliantly thought out, Alisha commented. Who comes up with this stuff?
Who'd have the most know-how in such things?
No! You?
Not quite, but you're on the right track, Tim grinned.
They descended the stairs and retraced their steps through passages and cellars

77 The reader is kindly asked to understand that the address cannot be disclosed.

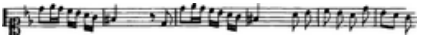
until they stood before the transition they'd come through. Tim showed Alisha a jute curtain that usually concealed it. On the wall, faintly visible in faded colors, was the stylized woman offering her breasts.
I'll hang the curtain back up after you, Tim explained. The excursion's over; we won't risk more. You go first!
After Alisha passed through the wall, Tim rehung the jute cloth on the old wall hooks and followed.

In the transition space, a loudly laughing Alisha grabbed him and pushed him into the pool.
Surprise excursion succeeded, she commented as they splashed in the water. Even if I sort of suspected it. So I can get to Peridëis from that bar anytime later?
Just be careful it doesn't attract attention. Otherwise, yes. As often as you want.
Insane! It's maybe a half-hour walk from my place, tops!
Lots of people just pop over for a few hours, Tim said. Like going out. There's a reason the tavern's so elaborately designed.
They come to Peridëis just to fool around? Couldn't they do that at home?
It's thrilling to watch others or be seen. And then there's all the equipment. Plus, not every intimate game is something prudish hometown moralists would tolerate.
And you can be as loud as you want.
True! That alone.
And it's like a quick trip to the South Seas.
Jackpot! Alisha exclaimed. Right by the city are those palm beaches with banana groves and all the trimmings—a half-hour from a Berlin backyard to a South Sea shore! But your other points convinced me too.
They left the pool and returned to Peridëis.
Alisha wanted to talk more about the experience, so they lingered in the tavern. Other guests gave her heaps of advice on how to act in the East Berlin bar, how to approach and leave discreetly, and so on. She shouldn't worry about leaving her clothes in the transition—neither thieves nor dampness would harm them. No thieves, as no one had heard of any, and no dampness because… no one knew why the air was completely dry away from the water. Nothing ever molded there. Still, some people unnecessarily brought rubberized gym bags for their clothes. Alisha laughed—she'd probably be one of them later.

Clara whisked Alisha away again, which Tim shamelessly used to grab another beer and chat with old acquaintances.
Ever thought about why women have breasts? Clara asked.
For nursing, obviously, Alisha replied.
And why don't they go away when you're not nursing?
Why should they?

Because that's how it is with all other mammals! Except humans. A doctor here gave a fascinating talk about it once…
They have lectures here?!
Yeah, often. About Peridëis, tips, advice, ideas. No need to stay ignorant! Where was I? Oh, right, this doctor held an educational evening. She said that's how it is. Scholars agree breasts stay outside nursing solely to act as a kind of lure. But they argue about why. *Breasts are to women what a tail is to a peacock.* For show or to outshine other women. But why do men, even out there, always want to grab them? They're constantly staring. And when you're intimate, their fingers or mouth are right there. Not that it bothers me! I'm just saying that's how it is. Or do you disagree?
No! Alisha said, puzzled about where Clara was going. Of course, she knew men always wanted to touch or stare at breasts. Who didn't?
Well, Clara said mysteriously, why not take the obvious next step and say breasts are for men *and* children?
But people do say that. Does anyone deny it?
No, that's not what I mean. Why just the breasts themselves? Why not what's in them? Why shouldn't the milk also be there to give men pleasure, so they don't run off but keep doing all sorts of things for you? Like here, but with the idea that the ever-present breast evolved for that purpose?
A man who'd been listening chimed in: Because, like many other theories, you can't prove it. A good theory needs a way to be disproven. Otherwise, it's just speculation.
But there are plenty of other unprovable theories, Clara grumbled.
The man laughed. True! he said. But some things people want to believe come hell or high water, and others they refuse to believe just as fiercely. Better watch your tongue, or you'll get burned.
He walked off.
There you have it, Clara complained. My theory's no worse than any other bad theory.
Tim had returned and said: Take heart, there are actually indigenous peoples in the other world where men happily sip their wives' milk[78]. Though you'd have to ask why it's not more widespread there. In so-called high cultures, I only know it tied to claims about the effects of drinking breastmilk for men.
Sure, Clara scoffed. In my day, men only bedded their wives to make a child. That's what they said. *If* they said anything. You'd wonder where kids even came from, since it was *never* talked about.
Do you have a man? Alisha asked, steering Clara off the topic.
I do, Clara beamed. Sadly, they never stick around long, she added glumly. At

78 Which ones? This is known only among Aborigines in Northern Australia, Papua, and some South American Indigenous tribes.

least the visitors, she clarified. A man should be able to wield magic and not fear it, or it's only half the deal. But visitors are always so stubborn—that's the real problem.
Tim chuckled, and Alisha learned something new.
They left the Fritzen Tavern, and Clara wished Alisha all the best.
Still a nice girl, Alisha said outside.
Just stubborn, Tim replied.

Back in the City

Back in the city, Tim showed Alisha more sights, quirky buildings, and risqué ideas. He took her to the slave market, where you could offer yourself for minutes, hours, or longer if you had no better solution for your problems. They also visited the milk market, where Alisha, just for fun, let herself be completely milked dry. Until nothing came out and she felt a sharp tugging deep in her breasts. Did you watch closely? she teased Tim. That's how it's done!
But saying Alisha let herself be milked *just for fun* wasn't quite true. She had fun, sure. But the master milker had to be paid for his art. After he tasted her milk and praised it enthusiastically, another layer of fun was added. The owner of the nearby carting business spontaneously offered Alisha a pony cart for her milked-out milk. Including the pony, for a week's lease. The "pony" being the man pulling the cart. Alisha, of course, had to provide for his food, milk, and satisfaction. She couldn't say no. She'd planned outings around the area, but Tim assured her finding a return ride for the pony cart where they were headed would be no issue.
Where are we going? Alisha asked.
After we see the Peri again tomorrow, it's time to wrap up your first journey so you can process it all, Tim said. That's the plan, at least. Then we'll head to a transition to Algeria that's more comfortable than the one we came through. You'll see.
There wasn't much to say to that. Alisha was reluctant to leave Peridëis for now but looked forward to continuing and to a stopover at her apartment back home. But that was still ahead.
Say, Alisha hesitated, the pony lessor said I'm fully responsible for the pony's care during the lease…
You want to use it for your pleasure?
Alisha hemmed and hawed. Y-yeah, she stammered. You know, my loins have been itching like crazy here, and I'd really like to…
That's fine! You don't need to ask permission.
But I'd rather have you… no, I don't want to pressure you… but I'd like it if you

at least watched. If the pony satisfies me, but I… for you… with you… ugh, it's complicated.
I get what you mean. Maybe it'll bring me some relief too, purely by accident, of course.
You'd do that for me?! Alisha cheered, throwing her arms around Tim. He felt her tears wet his ear and neck.
Alisha inspected the available ponies and picked one with a very large penis. I just want to try it, she said, glancing at Tim. He rolled his eyes playfully.
Their first outing around the Red Rose City was a blast. After the pony tasted Alisha's breastmilk fresh from her breast, it was fired up, covering impressive distances at a jog just to please her. Tim, a fit guy himself, could barely keep up.
Slow down! he laughed, out of breath. You'll wear your pony out!
Liar, Alisha laughed.
That first evening, though, the pony only got a handjob from Alisha. That had to do, she decided. She ordered it to climax, wanting to watch and figuring her milk more than justified the demand. The pony obeyed, and Alisha, in all innocence, found it quite intriguing to bring its sizable penis to swell and then release. What you do when you must…
The night and closeness, however, belonged to Tim.

The next morning, they had their second audience with the Great Peri. Alisha put the lingering arousal from the previous evening to good use when she performed the promised low service (bent over) for the castle gatekeeper. He openly wished her Tim as a husband afterward, praising him to the skies.
After the mandatory *proper* cleaning by the beautiful, identical naked women, Alisha and Tim stood before the Great Peri again.
The Great Peri spoke to Tim: I know full well you've honestly tried to keep your promised chastity, but you haven't quite succeeded.
Tim turned deep red.
But, but… Alisha tried to defend him.
Hold on, the Great Peri said. You, as a woman, have nothing to answer for, and as for the bailiff, well, we'll show leniency since he did try. Do you truly understand why *you* are here? Brought at my direct command?
N-no, Alisha stammered. Not exactly…
Visitors are like a fresh breeze for Peridëis, the Great Peri said to Alisha, and are tolerated to a certain extent for that reason. Peridëis needs ideas and fantasies from outside. Visitors bring new things—new worlds, events, colors, sounds, forms, customs. Including the steamy kind. You'll understand why it's worth choosing visitors carefully. The locals live only in their given world; they invent nothing new. Visitors from outside are like artists, shaping Peridëis. For that, we grant artistic and fool's freedom, even when they overstep. We Peris have

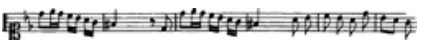
fantasies and dreams like you visitors, but left alone, we'd be like people locked in a golden cage—Peridëis would wither over time as our thoughts and fantasies fade. We need you not just for amusement (Alisha swallowed), but as a mirror and touchstone. Plus, we need you for practical reasons: you handle various tasks for us. In short: your imagination, experience, and work in exchange for the joys of Peridëis—that's our offer. It's little we ask. But you, Alisha, have already justified your stay here.
How? Alisha asked, stunned.
Well, the Great Peri said, you made quite a sacrifice giving yourself to that Captain Prillwitz. It gave me an idea. With a single task in the other world, you can clear the remaining debt of your intriguing bailiff entirely. I've *noticed* your hearts beat for each other. I like that. If you complete my task, I'll waive the claims I have on his erect member.
Alisha must have looked startled, as Tim said beside her: She does, Alisha. The Great Peri has been very generous.
Of course! Alisha thought. Of course! Heavens, how could I let myself go like that? I'm standing before a powerful sorceress. I just didn't think. What luck she's relenting.
Alisha was genuinely grateful. To show it, she made a deep curtsy, accidentally bowing her head.
You'd better break that male habit quickly, the Great Peri said sternly, lifting Alisha's chin. Then she continued: Now, my idea. If you fulfill this task—*really* fulfill it—your bailiff's celibacy will be lifted, so you can enjoy him. And since he'll gain the right to live in Peridëis officially, he'll stay yours. The task isn't difficult but weighty. Want to hear it?
Alisha and Tim listened, breathless. More on that later.
Finally, the Great Peri asked: Do you agree to this offer? You, Alisha?
Yes! Alisha said firmly.
You, bailiff?
Yes, Tim said, swallowing.
They were dismissed, their audience concluded.

I don't want to hear about the task until it's time to carry it out, Alisha said once they were outside. Not here in Peridëis. Agreed?
Suits me fine, Tim replied. Did the Great Peri impress you a lot?
Yes.
She exaggerates a bit, in her favor. Peridëis doesn't fade that quickly. But she herself is insatiable.
Lucky for me, Alisha said. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here, right? And she was generous enough to release you.
True.

They walked in silence for a while.
Now what? Alisha asked.
Tim took a deep breath. Back to the other world, he said. But in full comfort, through a safe transition. You need to vacation in Algeria to be seen and have something to talk about. From there, you'll head home. You've got about ten days left in the other world.
Why ten days?
Your booked vacation! Travel there, stay, travel back. Time here in Peridëis only counts as one-twelfth. Forgot?
Hearing and understanding are two different things, Alisha said.
Take heart, Tim said. Everyone feels that way.
Are you coming along? Alisha asked, already sensing the answer.
No, sadly not. You traveled alone and must arrive alone. I don't exist on your trip, and you never saw me. But we'll meet again soon enough. If…
We said we wouldn't talk about it now.
The other world, the outside, felt infinitely distant to Alisha. But there was a task to complete. Still, now was now, here was here. And there was the official vacation afterward. No need to spoil the mood.

They left the city. Alisha on the pony cart with a delighted pony, likely hauling the best load of its life (the finest milk), and Tim on foot. This time, on a green paved path.
I wonder, Tim said, how does the Peri know there were breaches of celibacy? Are the Peris really informed about everything in Peridëis, or at least almost everything?
Alisha laughed: That question from you! It's classic carnival magic. Think about it. What percentage of men masturbate?
I don't know. Most, probably.
More like nearly all—around 97 percent, I think. Now take Peridëis's intense sexuality, plus all the sexual acts you see or hear about, which *must* arouse you. Add a constantly aroused woman beside you, so you're always walking into my arousal scent cloud. Even the toughest man would have *at least* wet dreams or spontaneous climaxes. It's like a summer storm brewing, and as a weather prophet, you predict rain. I think that's how monasteries and religious sects control their members—it's predictable no one can hold out. Eventually, everyone has lustful thoughts or relieves the pressure by hand. Then comes the guilt, and since no one can truly switch off their sexuality, there's constant guilt, the perfect basis for keeping the flock in line. Everyone thinks, *I'm the only sinner*, because everyone acts oh-so-holy and sinless. *So I must try harder.* Know the Epimenides paradox?

No.
He was a Cretan who said, “All Cretans are liars.” The unsolvable question is, is he lying or telling the truth?
Tim laughed.
Alisha continued: It’s like that with the abstinence paradox: all abstainers aren’t abstinent. Turn it into an ideology, and you wield control.
Tim fell silent.
They walked quietly along the green paved path for a while.
Finally, Tim cleared his throat. Would you hold it against me if I stick to celibacy now anyway, to avoid any risks? I’ve invested so much already.
Alisha sighed. No, of course not. I’m just constantly afraid another woman could easily sway you in your state. Look down at yourself. The slightest trigger, and your penis is erect! And I’m scared this constant intense restraint might change you. At least don’t fight your urges in your dreams. If you can manage that, let me be the focus of your arousal, no matter what you’re doing with me there. Will you try?
Yes.
Thank you.
Brrr! Alisha called to the pony, and it stopped.
Come into the bushes, she said to Tim. My breasts are aching. She stepped off the pony cart and pulled Tim by the hand until the pony couldn’t see them.



The Pony Cheats

As they traveled along the green paved path toward the transition to the other world, Alisha hadn’t once used the (very willing) pony. Some things are different in fantasy than in reality; there are right moments and wrong moments, and moods shift. Alisha preferred getting her dose of closeness and satisfaction from Tim, whom the Peri couldn’t forbid from lying with her. Lately, Alisha felt she might reach a peak when Tim suckled her milk. Perhaps because her milk now flowed well, building an intriguing pressure in her breasts that released in waves, making the flow palpable in her nipples. Tim had developed a knack for the deeper secrets of Alisha’s breasts—knowing when to suckle or tug, press or massage, touch gently or firmly. He played with it, sometimes taking her nipples in his mouth, sometimes pulling them out to squirt the milk into his mouth with his fingers—or playfully spraying the precious witch’s milk around, rubbing it on himself, or whatever else. Only he could do this in that special way, tuning into Alisha’s soul and the physical depths of her breasts. Though it could also be Alisha craving exactly what he was doing at that moment. It’s hard to untangle, but what does it matter? The fulfillment is the same in the end.

The poor pony was left out. Since it tried so hard, Alisha, out of genuine pity, let it come to her at least once a day, but only to her breasts, emptying its penis by hand. She insisted on *emptying*, not just a dry climax. The castle gatekeeper had let slip that the men's trick of a dry climax made them ready for women again much faster. That was exactly what Alisha *didn't* want with the pony. With her precious milk, she could demand ejaculation, and she'd threatened the pony with pumped milk if it held back. They did meet two girls en route who fancied having fun with the pony. Alisha now understood what the slave trader meant about the pony needing its share. A fussy woman might be better off walking.

So they pressed on along the green paved path, and Alisha felt a touch of melancholy. Unfounded, of course—she could return anytime. But watching this beautiful landscape pass by, feeling the pleasant baseline arousal in her loins, thinking of the total lack of prudishness, and lounging comfortably in the pony cart while chatting with Tim (which worked wonderfully during the ride)—oh, it was hard to let go.

She'd given in once. While giving Tim her elixir, her body had grown too heated, especially her loins. Half out of her mind, she'd ordered the pony to use its tongue to at least temporarily soothe her excessive desires. The pony complied with surprising delicacy, likely sensing it was its best shot at reaching the target its tongue was permitted to calm. By the time Alisha emerged from her daze, the pony was already standing humbly, facing forward again.

Onward they went along the green paved path. Several valleys branched off, several paths joined, and once they even traveled by moonlight.

After a few days, the valley opened into a kind of steppe, dotted with scattered rocks, each one to five meters tall. Alisha had never seen such dry grassland in Peridëis, where the ground was usually well-moistened and the plants deep green or colorful.

Not here.

In the middle of the valley, in the heart of the dry steppe, stood a wooden building.

What does that building remind me of? Alisha puzzled.

Tim frowned: I haven't traveled this route, but no one's ever mentioned this valley or house, he said. Did we take a wrong turn? The path's color looks different now.

Tschitscheringreen, Alisha said.

Tschitscheringreen?!

Alisha laughed. My parents' Trabant is that color. My dad calls all vague green shades tschitscheringreen. Like the oil-based paint on public restroom baseboards.

What does that word mean?

No idea. Tell me if you find out.
Hm, Tim said. Let's just check out that house. It's too late for today anyway, and there might be something interesting.
They continued on the tschitscheringreen paved path, but suddenly the pony veered off to avoid a five-meter rock, pulling the cart onto the grass.
What's going on? Alisha asked loudly.
The pony glanced back fearfully but kept pulling through the grass, clearly aiming to approach the wooden house in a wide arc.
Tim, who'd quickly glanced at the rock, caught up at a jog and shouted to Alisha: Just fool's gold!
Right! The locals didn't like that. But such a big detour for it?
No matter, they neared the wooden house. Just from a different side.
Suddenly, Alisha burst out laughing. Know what that house reminds me of?
???
Wild West movies!
Alisha was right. The front of the house had "Saloon" written above, and everything else was unmistakable, including the door.
Let's hope you're not right to the bitter end, Tim said. I'm not in the mood for shootouts or Indian raids, even if they're throwing cotton balls.
When they reached the saloon, Tim said: Well, let's play along. And he tied the pony up out front, as was proper.

Howdy, a voice greeted Alisha and Tim. New faces. How's that?
A barkeep stood behind the counter, polishing glasses. A few guests in cowboy outfits sat at tables toward the back, drinking whiskey and playing poker. Not many.
We must've gotten lost, Tim said. We're looking for another tavern.
Is that so? the barkeep said. How'd that happen?
The pony was supposed to know the way, Tim replied. Seems it doesn't.
What'd you tell the pony? the barkeep asked.
That I want to go to the tavern. The Tam Tavern, it's called.
Know it. Did you tell the pony the route or just the destination?
Tim hesitated, sensing the mistake.
The barkeep let out a dirty laugh. You're no greenhorn, how'd you mess this up? Ever taken a taxi? If you're not damn careful, the driver'll circle the city three times to fleece you. You've got a mighty tasty girl there, and the longer the ride, the more fun the pony has with that treat.
Tim drew his riding crop from its holster and stormed outside.
Alisha heard him shout in front of the saloon.
How much do you deserve?
A hundred lashes, master! I've earned it! I've wickedly deceived you! Punish me,

oh master.
Are you a masochist?
Yes, oh master.
Then your punishment is no punishment.
Tim returned, the barkeep wiping tears of laughter.
Two beers. Got any? Tim asked, glowering.
Got money?
Money? Why?
Why? This is a proper American saloon, and there's three things you *can't* do. First, be naked. You've at least gotta claim you're dressed. Gives everyone a chance to pretend they don't see you're bare. Same goes for screwing in public—it's the same deal. Second, do *anything* for free. That's communist. So you let folks gift you dollars, which all the kind-hearted patrons here will do. You pay with those. Not communist.
And third?
Third, you can't let *anyone* see you drinking alcohol.
But everyone's drinking alcohol here.
The key difference: you don't see it. The mugs are opaque.
Any more rules like that?
Plenty.
How am I supposed to know them all?
You'll know when the sheriff locks you up. The jail's back there (he pointed to a corner of the tavern).
And then?! Alisha, who'd been standing by, cried out in horror.
Then you're let go, the barkeep shrugged. You did what you wanted, the sheriff showed order's kept, I don't clash with the law. In short: everyone had fun. Here's two beers, so you see we've got proper beer.
Alisha, bewildered, took her beer (in opaque mugs) and headed to a table by the window.
She returned to the bar: If I strip now and get paid, I'll first get dollars, second go to jail, third get out right away, and fourth can pay for what I order. Right?
Correct.
Hey, why strip? Tim asked. You heard him: ask the others, they'll gift you something.
No, Alisha laughed. With a strip, I've earned *honest* money through hard work. Plus, I've always wanted real dollars and to do a proper strip.
In a flash, Alisha slipped away from Tim and climbed onto a free table in the middle of the saloon.
Ladies and gentlemen! When's the last time you saw a proper woman naked? Come and enjoy, here's a fine lady. Who wants in, who's next, who hasn't yet? Step up and see—every inch of my bare flesh is worth its price!

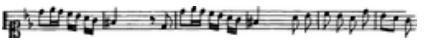
Tim, grinning, sank into a chair, propped his legs on the table, and watched eagerly.
The men leapt from their tables, whooping and crowding closer.
Alisha had only her dress to shed, but she could drag it out wickedly slow, revealing one patch of skin at a time. Naturally, each inch cost extra dollars. Her already-exposed breasts gained value as she jiggled them, leaning forward (for extra dollars), arching back, and performing all sorts of tricks. But only eye-candy moves.
Tim, however, turned to peer out the door. His suspicion was spot-on—the pony had dared to peek inside. Just you wait! Tim shouted, darting outside to tie the pony tightly in a spot so remote it couldn't even hear what was happening.
When Tim reentered the saloon, the dress was moments from falling. But Alisha stretched that out too. They'd eat well with this haul!
Eventually, there was nothing left to delay, and Alisha stood fully naked on the table. Even then, she stayed within burlesque bounds—looser here than in the other world, but still there. She didn't display her vulva, keeping her legs primly together, though she didn't shy from emphasizing that area. Her hands playfully traced her mound and thighs, she showed off her round, feminine buttocks at length, and dollars piled up on, under, and around her table.
Thank you! Alisha laughed. You've spared a poor, lost traveler from begging for her meal.
Laughter and cheers.
She'd give the men one last treat. As she bent down, those watching caught a glimpse of where her thighs met her buttocks, curving in an O-shape to make way for the secret gate between. But despite much bending to gather her dollars, that gate stayed closed. At least for the cheering men.
Naked, Alisha leapt onto Tim's lap. He groaned loudly, and the chair collapsed under them.
The men applauded and returned to their tables.
Hey, why aren't I getting arrested? Alisha asked.
Sheriff was out takin' a leak.
A man stepped up to the bar, clearly not out taking a leak.
Hey! You weren't peeing, Alisha said, laughing.
But my sheriff's star was, he said, pulling it from his pocket and pinning it on. By the way, your dress seems a bit risqué, he said to the stark-naked Alisha. Fix that up a bit. We don't want trouble here.
He sauntered back to his table to resume his poker game.
Alisha got herself city-presentable again and asked the barkeep: Got anything to eat?
She plunked a pile of dollars on the bar—thick gold coins, each stamped with the Peridëis symbol on both sides. No numbers. One coin, one dollar, simple as that.

We got the finest grub, the barkeep said.
The food was indeed fantastic, and Alisha wasn't so mean as to forget the pony outside. Trickery or not, the pony was in a tough spot, and punishment shouldn't go too far. Later that evening, a singer performed, but they didn't pay close attention—his music wasn't their generation's. It was his own song, they were told, and he didn't sing badly. Something about "Love me Tender," a tune Alisha had definitely heard before. Someone from a corner behind them yelled *Quiet!* because they were chatting too loudly. But it was the blaring music that forced them to raise their voices.
Every evening must end, and they retired.
The room was decent, with an old-fashioned bathtub Alisha used, having sweated plenty during her strip. They spent the night in a wonderful featherbed. Not that they'd slept poorly before. Not that they'd missed a featherbed. But having one was nice, especially since Alisha imagined falling asleep with Tim in a shared apartment, in a shared marital bed. No gap, one big blanket, not two. On that, she was hopelessly traditional. A fine topic for her evening relaxation ritual before drifting off.

The next morning, the pony, unprompted, vowed no more shenanigans, looking thoroughly remorseful. But ten minutes later, it shied again as they neared the rock it had detoured around before. Tim called a halt and went to inspect the rock. Alisha heard an appreciative whistle shortly after Tim vanished into a crevice. When he returned, he allowed the pony its detour and said to Alisha: A transition! No wonder the pony's scared. Locals never go near them. But it's not our transition—I suspect this one leads to North America.
Makes sense, Alisha said, still surprised. Wait, she added, could a transition to America and one to Australia be right next to each other? So you could walk from America to Australia in minutes?
Yes, Tim said.
Or from East Berlin to West Berlin?
Sharp thinking. Not quite. I don't know of a transition in West Berlin; that's why West Berliners come east. But to Switzerland, yes. I know there's one there. Be *insanely* careful not to give yourself away in East Berlin because of this.
Through Western stuff I bring back?
No, that's impossible. But you'll see things that interest everyone in the East. And the Stasi's very interested in that.
I'll keep that in mind, thanks for the tip.
If you can't resist blabbing, invent a dead acquaintance of your aunt who visited Switzerland. Attribute the stories to her. Something like that. But be cautious. If someone pries too much, don't make up new details—just say, "No idea, she didn't tell me that." Otherwise, you'll trip up eventually. Lying is exhausting.

Better stick to talking with people who know Peridëis. The tavern's perfect for that.

Eventually, they got off the wrong (tschitscheringreen) path and back onto the proper green paved path. On they went. Since Alisha had comforted the pony and forgiven its trickery, it pulled with renewed zeal.



The Tam Tavern

Alisha and Tim traveled four more days, the green paved path climbing gently toward the mountains after a crossroads until the valley widened briefly but then ended at a steep cliff face. Dense forest reached a grassy slope at the base of the cliff. The green path slanted up the slope and ended at the foot of a staircase, only the start of which was visible.
We're here, Tim said. Up there's the Tam Tavern, where we were headed.
The pony snorted as the incline steepened, then beamed when it reached the base of the staircase leading to the Tam Tavern.
At the foot of the stairs was a small spring. Alisha hopped off the pony cart, scooped water with both hands, and splashed it in the pony's face.
You did great, pony! she exclaimed. I'm very pleased. Any special wishes?
One that's not too bold, Tim added.
The pony looked humbly at the ground. I'd be overjoyed if you'd spare me a small stash of your magic milk for the return trip.
You know I'm a witch?
Yes, mistress. Your fresh milk intoxicated me, gave me wings. It's far stronger than the whispers about witch's milk.
Aren't you afraid of me?
Yes. Very afraid.
Yet you pulled me anyway?
The reward was indescribable. Fear turned to desire.
Think others feel the same?
Maybe. Where else do all the rumors about witches come from?
Alisha laughed. You're clever, pony! So, thank…
No! Please, no thanks! the pony cried.
Fine, Alisha said, glancing questioningly at Tim.
Tim nudged her and pointed to her breasts. Alisha blushed, having nearly forgotten her promise from moments ago.
Got a jug for the milk? Tim asked the pony.
No, master. Just a small pot of emergency women's butter.

I should've learned how to make women's butter, Alisha mused.
Milk powder's quicker, Tim said.
Master? the pony ventured.
Yes?
I'd be content if the kind witch granted me one last taste of fresh milk. Then auction me for new wheels, and all's well. The new renter can look after me later.
Deal, Alisha said.
Give the pony its reward, and I'll see about auctioning it, Tim said. Be right back.
Tim climbed the steps to the tavern. As if on cue, the pony latched onto Alisha's breast with sudden, almost savage intensity, making her feel as if her eyeballs might be sucked inward.
That's too much! Alisha cried, alarmed. Ouch! That hurts!
The pony ignored her. It seemed to seize the journey's end to drain every drop it could, or perhaps Alisha's breastmilk was so potent when unchecked. Whatever the reason, the pony descended into a frenzy.
Alisha fought back with hands and feet, but the pony was far stronger, suckling as if to rip her nipple off.
I'll make you pay, you ungrateful beast! she shouted, digging her nails deep into its arms.
The pony reared in pain but didn't let go. Alisha raked her nails through its skin, plowing like a farmer tilling a field. A muffled groan escaped the pony's nose, but it kept sucking and pulling with all its might.
Then Alisha had an idea. She was a witch! Could she manage a flash-jump? As the pony tugged, she stared at the tavern entrance, wishing desperately to be there. Nothing happened. She tried again, focusing hard. But the pony's yanking disrupted her concentration.
What a dumb cow I am! Alisha scolded herself. Tim was still on the stairs—high up, but in reach. Why didn't I call him sooner? She let out a piercing scream.
Tim spun around instantly, racing down the steps, taking several at a time.
Alisha suddenly felt a surge of strength, far surpassing the pony, and bit down hard on its forearm.
Auuuuuuu!
That did it! The pony had to let go, but Alisha didn't, holding fast even as it dragged her to the ground. Only when Tim reached them did she release her bite.
In a flash, Tim whipped out his riding crop and laid into the pony's backside.
Ow-ow-ow-ow! the pony wailed, escape impossible with the cart tethered.
Alisha scrambled behind Tim, covering her nipples with her hands for safety.
That's what you get! she shouted, plopping onto the hillside to watch. Harder! The beast can take more! she egged Tim on.
Ow-ow-ow-ow! the pony yelped again, trapped by the cart.
Loud laughter echoed from the tavern door above. A man shouted: Spare its hide,

I've got a better idea!
What's that? Tim called up, still gripping the pony by an ear.
I'll buy it off you! the man shouted. I promise it'll haul me back to the city faster than a racehorse.
No, please! the pony whimpered.
Yes, that's fair, Alisha said spitefully.
And so it was settled. The buyer, dressed like an Arab, didn't seal the deal with a handshake but with a polite bow to Alisha.
Guys like him, Tim whispered in Alisha's ear (still gripping the pony's ear), don't shake hands with strange women for moral reasons. But they seem fine with the other parts, from what I've seen.
The man wore an ankle-length white robe, cut wide open from the waist down like Alisha's dress, revealing a very prominent erection.
Alisha struggled to keep a straight face, especially since the buyer, out of genuine decorum, avoided her face and instead gazed where her breasts rested, sweet and ripe.
The pony was gone. Alisha thought with grim satisfaction of what it now faced. Hopefully, no women would cross the buyer's path soon—judging by that impressive erection, the pony might get a rear-end reckoning instead.
Then Alisha told Tim: Next, I want to properly learn the flash-jump. She recounted her failed attempt during the scuffle.
You wouldn't have managed it in that excitement anyway, Tim replied. But you reacted well—calling for help, fighting back.
I should've kicked him in the balls, Alisha said.
Never do that. If you miss, which is likely, you're in deep trouble. The pain's excruciating, but it peaks after a few seconds, giving him time to take you down. More importantly, men usually have a restraint toward women. A kick to the balls is an absolute taboo. Break that, and he'll have no taboos toward you. An unleashed, raging man is bad news.
I didn't mean it seriously, Alisha said. I need to vent, and cussing and violent fantasies help a ton. Otherwise, I wouldn't want to be in the pony's shoes—the Arab looked like he meant business.
A young man in Arab attire, his robe suspiciously short just below the buttocks, revealing his genitals with each step, passed them with two cart wheels.
Curious, Alisha glanced back at the foot of the stairs. Aha. The older and younger Arabs were kissing. Such details mattered to Alisha—she needed to gauge which men were potentially available. But why had the older one stared at her breasts so much? Or had he? Hm. Kind of a shame. But the pony was in for a rough time, that was certain.
Alisha waved to the Arabs at the stairs' base, and they waved back.
Poor, poor pony, Alisha giggled.

Below, they were already swapping the wheels. They likely had milk powder or women's butter ready too—Alisha noticed the men carrying small containers.

They reached the door of the Tam Tavern. The entrance into the rock was sealed by a double-winged, heavy wooden door, richly adorned with metal fittings. The fittings formed intricate, repeating patterns that Alisha couldn't get enough of. All these patterns swirled around separate depictions on each door of a woman offering her breasts, her lower body shaped as a large "O." The right wing had a large bronze ring, though they didn't need to knock—the door stood wide open, and laughing, joking men welcomed them.
Salaam Alaikum, said one.
Or did Alisha just think so, and he'd said *Good day*?
The archway was unmistakably Oriental. Inside, the tavern's decor was Arabic too.
Beer? asked a man behind the bar, dressed anything but Arabic.
Beer?! Alisha echoed. I thought you didn't drink alcohol. Or aren't you all Arabs?
We are, mostly, the man replied. You meant Muslims. There are lots of Black folks here too.
Uh, yeah.
Simple: the rule applies to us, not you. Plus, we've got drunks among us too. Our rule is one lash per beer. He brandished a whip fit for mice and continued: That settles the penalty, no future consequences. We're in paradise, after all.
So no one dares drink anymore?
Why not? The penalty's paid. You can have water, juice, or nothing. We've got coffee or tea too.
The tea's good, Tim said. The coffee's probably not your taste.
The tea was indeed excellent.
A good number of men sat around, chatting, laughing, and playing a board game. At least half were Black Africans, the rest North Africans or Arabs—Alisha couldn't tell them apart. And nearly all were men.
Tim asked: Why mostly men here?
Oh, come on, the barman griped. Most guys come without their wives. Usually no issue. But now, for some reason, a ton of men showed up at once, and we've run out of virgins. They're all waiting for a ride back to the city.
You know why we don't bring our wives and need a Sunamite[79], a man at a nearby table cut in.
Here we go again, the barman sighed.

79 Sunamite: Named after the biblical figure Abishag of Shunem, but documented in many non-biblical cultures. According to ancient belief, a woman who brings health or longevity to a man through her presence alone. Depending on tradition, this is achieved through her scent or, e.g., her milk. In Peridëis, it's obviously the milk.

Here's the deal, the man explained. We can't bring our wives here because the law says if I drink a woman's breastmilk, she's kin, and I can't sleep with her—like my sister's off-limits. If I drink my wife's breastmilk, our marriage is void. So I need a Sunamite to give me milk I won't touch otherwise. Basically, I need two women—one for milk, one for my urges. But if the Sunamite can give me things my wife can't, there's trouble. Why take on extra hassle, especially when someone's gotta watch the kids at home?
Whoa, Alisha said softly. Very softly.
Brother, you're wrong, another man chimed in. The proper ruling is that an existing marriage can't be voided by milk kinship. With strangers, yes, but not your wife. The marriage predates the kinship.
You're both wrong, brothers, another man interjected. Milk kinship only forms after being fully nursed five times by a woman, and that applies only under two years of age.
What if I'm not even full yet? a man from the back of the room asked.
You can drink the milk from a cup, another man added.
The Sunamite's still not halal[80], said the man beside him.
Who cares!
It matters—you can't sleep with her anymore. She's gotta be halal.
Ten times, another man chimed in.
What?
Ten full nursings under two years are required.
Doesn't matter; no one here's under two.
It does matter. What if the two-year rule's a misinterpretation? Drink from a woman less than ten times, you're safe, and you can still use her for pleasure after.
Brother, think straight. Get two slaves—one gives breastmilk as a Sunamite, the other you use for pleasure.
What if I'm still not full? the man from the back asked again.
She's gotta be halal! a man from way back shouted.
Five times, came another comment.
Ha! the earlier man ignored the interruptions. I've got two wives at home! They're always at each other's throats. And if they agree, they gang up on me.
What if you mix them up at night? The unsatisfied one'll stay quiet, not make a peep, till she's got your seed and her loins are quivering! You're the fool then. No way. I take them one at a time. Keeps everyone happy.
All wrong, another man said. Milk kinship does exist, but it only matters with a stranger, because after nursing you, she doesn't have to veil herself anymore, and you can be alone with her.

80 Arabic: halal=permitted, haram=forbidden.

What? Alisha asked. Breast out first, then face? In that order?
You're thinking illogically, sister, the man said. How else would it work?
The barman rolled his eyes.
Alisha and Tim grabbed their tea and found a table far back by a window.
Once seated, Tim said quietly to Alisha: A 19th-century Egypt traveler wrote that women, upon seeing him, covered their faces with whatever was handy—often their hem, leaving their breasts completely bare[81].
Alisha giggled: Was it really like that back then?
No idea if everywhere, Tim said. That was just Egypt. But maybe the Orient was looser then. I read that around the same time, Persian nomad women sold their own milk straight from the breast at markets[82]. Just like in Peridëis. So, with enough distance in time and place, customs can shift drastically. It's easy to laugh at others when you're the clueless one.
But wasn't that milk kinship thing a bit… out there?
Judge for yourself, Tim grinned.
Definitely here in Peridëis.

A woman approached their table. She looked about 40, sharp, with black hair combed tightly back, resolute but not unkind. She wore a long black robe with hems richly embroidered in gold. The front slit was adorned, hinting at what lay beneath without revealing it directly. A gold belt closed the slit at the top, accentuating her figure without the dress being tight. Her breasts, like all women's in Peridëis, were bare, framed by gold embroidery, but a veil draped over them, letting only the contours and dark nipples show through.
May I join you? she asked.
Tim quickly covered Alisha's mouth and answered: Of course. He whispered to Alisha: As a woman, you must defer to the man here. Peridëis bends to men's wishes, and they bend the teachings of Prophet Mohammed's
The woman laughed. Don't let anyone hear that. Then she said: Hello, Alisha. Welcome to Peridëis. I'm Nadira.
You know me?
You know me too. I was expecting you.
I know you?!
Alisha racked her brain. Yes! Nadira's face, hair, and manner were undeniably familiar. But from where?

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81 Perhaps he means this report: Gustave Flaubert: From Egypt and Jerusalem (c. 1850) "[Egypt] In the countryside, for example, when they [women] see someone coming, they take their garment, hold it before their face, and to cover it, they bare what is called the bosom, namely the part between chin and navel. Oh, I've seen breasts here! Breasts I've seen! Breasts!"

82 See Jakob Eduard Polak: Persien (Persia), Volume 1 (1865).

Nadira helped: It was before you entered Peridëis.
You were the doctor at the airport! Alisha exclaimed, shocked.
Bingo!
Oh, sorry you had to wait, Alisha said.
Nadira laughed. I keep busy, don't worry. And the men here eat out of my hand.
How's that?
Because they're Muslims? Ever heard of Arab matriarchs? I'm serious!
Alisha laughed. What do you mean?
My grandmother said, "Men rule over women. But women rule over men." That's Europe. In Arabia, women say, "The man rules outside, but the woman rules at home." I have matron status here—they cower before me. Plus, I'm German and a doctor. It gets worse: I have a thing for making men kiss my feet in the bedroom. Some fall swooning to their knees, others politely keep their distance, with no desire to lock me in their bedroom. Guess what rumors swirl about me here?
Alisha laughed again. But couldn't that still cause trouble?
Here? No. What trouble? It's like your home with the staunch Party comrades versus regular folks. The regular men here just need to use their heads more instead of living by rote rules. That's a real issue in this region—*out there*, at least, where most of these tavern visitors come from. In Peridëis, that fades fast. Thanks to Peridëis and the lack of control.
May I interrupt? Tim asked.
Alisha looked at him questioningly.
It's… Alisha, you'll leave Peridëis for now and spend a few nice days in Algeria, Tim said. Real Algeria vacation. You know certain people would get suspicious if you didn't show up there or had nothing to say about it. You'll need some time for yourself too. I can't risk being seen there. I have to head back another way. So you'll go alone. But Nadira will join you for the next three or four days to help.
Alisha paled, tears welling in her eyes.
Don't cry, Tim pleaded. I'll be at your door back home soon. I promise. I don't know the exact time, but it won't be long. Then we'll continue. Honestly, I swear!
Alisha threw herself, sobbing, into Tim's arms as he sat beside her. Since he was seated, she sank to her knees. She scolded herself for crying, for pressing so close to his groin, even kissing it, clutching him tightly, eyes shut, wanting to stay like that.
But Tim gripped her firmly and pulled her up. He took her face in his hands, held it tightly, looked deep into her eyes, and said: *I won't be lost to you!*
Her mind couldn't grasp it. Her head said he was right, that she was acting like a foolish hen. But the older part of her brain said: Hold on. What you have is yours.
Her loins pressed his body to hers.
And his erect penis was all too close to her vulva, which wouldn't have been an issue if it weren't so blissfully slick and open. So his penis slipped right into her

vagina.
Alisha moaned.
Tim grabbed her, lifting her up, breaking their connection, which drew a heartbroken whimper from her. He said softly, urgently: No, Alisha, you know we can't. You have to wait.
Yet he pressed her body close and whispered: It's not long until we meet again. Think of all the beauty we've seen here. And think of more beauty ahead for us together. Now, it's better I don't drag this out.
Don't you need more milk from my breast? Alisha asked, regaining some composure.
Not urgently, Tim said, but I'd love to drink your milk once more, if it's not too hard for you.
Can I pleasure myself while you do?
Yes, gladly. Not just because your milk flows better then.
Alisha sat back in her chair, and now Tim knelt before her to reach her breasts.
Alisha didn't care that Nadira and the tavern's men watched. No, she *did* care. With eyes closed, she savored their gazes. It wasn't sleazy—their open, kind looks showed delight in watching while granting them their intimacy. Alisha wanted to show Tim desired her. Everyone should see he was hers. It was a declaration as a couple, a presentation. If only she could have him deep inside her. Her hand pushed her skirt aside to reach her bud. Tim noticed, lifting his body slightly to give her hand room to move.
Her reward was a wave, beautiful but not overpowering. Just beautiful. Enough to give her strength for a farewell that wasn't ungrateful or selfish. She took Tim's head, kissed his forehead: Go now, quick, she said. I can manage right now.
Tim kissed her forehead too. Then he left the tavern. His swollen, erect penis wasn't embarrassing—it loudly proclaimed he was the only one awaited by a wet embrace.

The next batch of virgins will arrive soon, the barman said loudly, having seen where everyone was looking. Quietly, he grumbled: Can't be fresh enough, that milk.
His annoyance was self-serving—he had a wide selection of milk powders and butter. Just ask and say thanks, that's all he wanted. His milk powders and butter came with clean provenance, as the men here always wanted to know exactly whose milk it was. Next, they'd probably ask if the donors had drunk other women's breastmilk, and if so, whose, how much, where they were from, and so on.

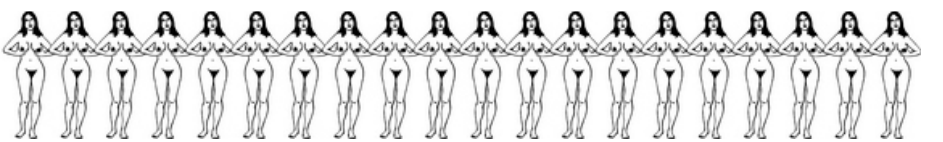
Alisha stood at the tavern's entrance, watching Tim. There! He turned and waved. Alisha waved back. But eventually, he vanished from sight. A tear rolled down

her cheek.
A man's voice came from behind: An Arab proverb says, "Love grows from absence."
How do you know I'm in love? Alisha asked softly, without turning.
Another Arab proverb says, "Love, pregnancy, and riding a camel can't be hidden."
Alisha smiled faintly. But it hurts to feel his absence, she said.
Well, the man said, I have a third Arab proverb, but I'm not entirely sure it fits.
Tell it anyway.
It goes: "Blows from a beloved are as sweet as raisins." In Arabic, it sounds prettier: *Darab al-habib zabib.*
Alisha smiled now. It does fit… but for other moments than this one.
Aha, so I guessed right, the man said. Here in Peridëis, things show more clearly than out there in the other world, but this saying has the grace of gently carrying a double meaning. It asks without asking and answers without answering.
Alisha turned around. Behind her stood a very likable older man of hard-to-guess age. To her surprise, he had deep black skin, slightly gray hair, and wore a blue robe with a matching blue headcloth. Don't worry, he said, I won't touch you or ask anything of you. I just wanted to comfort you.
Thank you, Alisha said. Grateful for the comfort, she asked: Would you like milk from me for your journey?
Since you're a witch by this realm's standards, I won't be foolish enough to wait for a local Sunamite, the man replied. I gladly accept your offer without hesitation. But as I said, don't worry—I'm a camel, as an Arab proverb goes: "A lover sees a flower differently than a camel."
Alisha laughed. Then drink the sweet nectar from my two flowers!
And the man in blue feasted on Alisha's breasts until they were truly empty and soft—not from his greed, but because her breasts had had little time to refill.
With a bow, the blue-clad man turned from Alisha, walked straight to the tavern door, and vanished.

Alisha returned to the back of the tavern where Nadira sat. Sorry it took so long, she said.
It's your first journey, Nadira replied. The time you need is the right time. But come, let's go.

Alisha followed Nadira. They left the Tam Tavern through a rear exit into a wide rocky crevice with a beautiful garden, a fountain at its center. The crevice wasn't long, and at the far end was a gate leading to a tunnel into the mountain. At the tunnel's end was a mosaic-adorned room with an altar table in the middle.
Undress, Nadira said.

Alisha stripped naked. She felt hollow. Will I get my dress back? she asked.
You'll get another just as beautiful, Nadira answered. Now Nadira undressed completely too. Her large breasts, sloping downward, surely had many admirers due to their fullness.
Alisha, Nadira said, I'll lie on the altar first. When I'm gone, you follow, okay?
Alisha nodded, uneasy.
Nadira lay on the altar, the air shimmered, and she was gone.
Alisha climbed onto the altar in a trance and lay on her back.
The world tipped, darkness fell, and Alisha spun through nothingness.



Return

Alisha opened her eyes again. She was in a kind of desert castle. That is, she *knew* it was a desert castle. How did she *know* that? She couldn't see anything through the walls. Yellow walls surrounded her. Polished walls. The floor was covered with worn mosaic tiles. Only patches of faded mosaic remained on the walls. Before her was a small pool, lined with bleached mosaic stones. It was a miracle there was water here at all. Crystal-clear water, no less. At another time, this place might have fascinated Alisha, its morbid appearance holding a hard-to-describe beauty. But now, it radiated only loneliness.

The doctor Nadira had been waiting for Alisha. Completely naked, with her full, pendulous breasts and now with loose black hair, she looked entirely different. Come, girl, she said in her firm yet kind way, taking the hesitant Alisha by the hand and leading her around the small pool to a wall niche, the only real splash of color. Alisha, barely registering her surroundings, saw that the niche depicted the familiar woman offering her breasts to the viewer, rendered in mosaic tiles.

In front of the niche stood two plastic bags, looking out of place. Nadira pointed to them and said: Your clothes are in there. And your passport.

Nadira reached into the bags and pulled out a pair of women's panties. Come, she said commandingly, lift your leg and hold onto me. Alisha mechanically raised one leg, then the other, and the panties were pulled up. Next came a bra. Strange. A bra. It felt oddly intrusive. The panties too. Nadira slipped Alisha's arms through the bra straps, lifted her breasts into the cups, and fastened it. It was a front-closing bra, hooked between the breasts.

In southern Algeria, it's better for a woman not to show off too much, Nadira said. As a tourist, you have some leeway, but even well-mannered men react as men. The men here aren't used to seeing much of a woman. So, nipples showing through or overly clear body outlines have a different effect here than back home. Keep that in mind over the next few days. Otherwise, you don't need to be too cautious—the people here are nice.

Alisha absorbed this through a fog. Sadness had gripped her.

Nadira pulled out a loose, yellow-ochre blouse with front buttons and put it on Alisha. Next came a long, khaki skirt adorned with floral patterns. Opaque. As Nadira slipped the skirt over her, Alisha at least noticed it was hand-embroidered.

Pretty skirt, Alisha said flatly, meaning it but lacking energy. Socks and shoes followed. Finally, Nadira pulled a money belt from the plastic bag. Your passport and some money are in here, she said. Wear it around your neck and don't take it off, except at the hotel. People here are generally very honest, but there's also

poverty and its consequences. So be mindful. Your other things are waiting at the hotel.
Now Nadira dressed herself. Ordinary khaki clothes, like those worn by many European tourists in Arabia when it's hot. Once dressed, she pinned her black hair back, restoring the resolute, slightly stern look Alisha knew.
I'll go first, Nadira said when she was dressed. Count to twenty, then follow me, okay? Don't linger! Count to twenty and just follow.
Alisha nodded.
The doctor Nadira vanished into the wall.
Alisha counted to twenty mechanically. Then she stepped into the wall herself.
Dark red, swirling liquid.
Alisha flailed her arms forward.
In moments, she was through.
Blinding sun and a scorching day greeted her.
Welcome to the other world, Nadira smiled.
They were in a rocky hollow. Sand-colored stone surrounded them, sand covered the ground. It was hot. Alisha was instantly drenched in sweat, despite a jutting rock shielding her from the sun.
Alisha turned around.
Faintly etched in a rocky niche was the familiar woman offering her breasts, her feet forming an "O."
There are very beautiful ancient rock carvings here, Nadira said behind Alisha's back, but they've been covered with clay to avoid drawing attention to this place, you know?
Alisha nodded mechanically.
Nadira looked up at the sky intently. Seeing nothing amiss, she said to Alisha: Come! and pulled her by the hand. A barely visible path led out of the hollow. At the top, Alisha felt a faint breeze, pleasant despite the merciless sun. A hat would've been useful.
Come, Nadira said, a car's waiting not far from here.
They walked hand in hand. They were atop a large rock, almost a small mountain. Stone above, the hollow below. Sand and scattered scree covered the ground. Not a single plant or animal in sight. The air shimmered with heat. A path wound imperceptibly down the rock's outer edge. It was easy to walk, with only a little scree troubling their feet. The surroundings offered the strangest rock formations imaginable. Alisha noticed them, found them remarkable and peculiar, but they didn't truly reach her heart.
Finally, they reached a spot between two rocks. They trudged through uncomfortably fine sand, around one corner, then another, and the narrow gorge opened up.
There, in the shade of a wide overhang, stood an off-road vehicle. Inside, or rather

sprawled across it, was a white-haired, full-bearded man, asleep. He wasn't an Arab.
This man knows Peridëis, Nadira said. So you can still speak openly.
Alisha nodded.
Oh, one more thing, Nadira said. I have an explicit request from your bailiff—Tim.
Nadira rummaged in her bag and produced a wonderfully cubic, golden-gleaming crystal.
Fool's gold! Alisha exclaimed.
He knew you'd be delighted, Nadira said, handing Alisha the crystal. Take it as a keepsake. It's from right near the transition but reveals nothing. Nadira called to the off-road vehicle: Hey, wake up!
The man blinked into the desert's glaring brightness, yawned, stretched, and finally stepped out to shake Alisha's hand in greeting.
Well, lass, hop in the rig, he said. We've got food and drink in the car, can talk there too. Sort of. No point standing around here—we've got a few hours' drive ahead.
He said it in German, Alisha noticed.
The "few hours" was nicely put, because by the time they'd driven through desert and tracks, reached a city, and arrived at a hotel, it was well into the night, and Alisha felt like not a single bone was in its right place. They'd only stopped to relieve themselves; there were no longer breaks. During the drive, Nadira had briefed her a bit for the coming days, massaged her breasts multiple times (hence the front-buttoned blouse and front-clasping bra), coaxing out every drop of milk, fed her food and drink, and explained things.
Alisha had let it all happen passively.
At the hotel, Nadira washed Alisha in the shower and put her to bed. On her own, Alisha might've walked into a cabinet, so exhausted and lethargic was she. She fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.
The muezzin's call woke her once, but she drifted back to sleep.
Alisha was still sleeping when it had long been light. A nightmare haunted her. Someone was yelling at her. Someone from home.
But then Alisha was shaken and woke up.
Nadira sat by the bed. Good morning, she said. Let's skip the nightmare, shall we?
How did you…???
You can tell, Nadira said. And it was to be expected. You know, after your first time in Peridëis, especially for a longer stretch, and knowing you can't go back for a while, it can lead to a nasty hangover mood. Peridëis feels so good, and here it's just… normal. You're not feeling any sexual desire right now, are you?
Bone dry, Alisha said.

That'll last two or three days, Nadira said. Then it'll be fine again. On your next Peridëis visit, it'll be less, then less again, and eventually you'll be used to the switch. When you're back on your feet, I'll take you to your hometown tour group. But not yet. Until then, I'll keep you distracted and be here for you. And one more thing, even if you're not in the mood now: I'll examine you regularly and ensure your milk flow stays active. You'll get a breast massage with thorough emptying every two hours. You'll enjoy it again soon. Now, go shower. Then we'll have a proper breakfast with coffee.

Nadira left the room.

Alisha got up and looked out the window. She saw a swimming pool (in the middle of the desert!), numerous palms, lush greenery below, and several small Oriental buildings scattered within a yellow wall. A small resort. Everything looked fairly new and was in excellent condition. Alisha saw two women in bikinis by the pool, and a few others strolled casually dressed through the grounds. Strict dress codes clearly didn't apply here.

Alisha showered thoroughly. She felt lonely. She missed Tim. She missed the pleasant constant arousal. Her loins were completely numb. No, not even that—they were absent, neutral like… like… her thigh. Looking in the bathroom mirror, Alisha burst into tears. She'd looked so much more beautiful in Peridëis. Her stomach was just flat, somehow. The feminine curve of her hips wasn't uniquely perfect anymore. Her rear had been a dream in Peridëis; her breasts… oh heavens, they just looked irrelevant. Too small, barely any milk left, no longer full, boring, utterly boring. The nipples and areolas were just… neutral, utterly neutral. The opposite of beautiful isn't ugly—it's neutral. Sobbing, Alisha sank to the floor. Her hair was just… something. Horrible! She'd never let a hairdresser near it again—in Peridëis, it had fallen perfectly without one, but here it looked awful, with embarrassing traces of hometown salon work undeniable. But above all, her breasts… Was she really so horribly ugly?

Now, now, now, Alisha heard Nadira from behind. Nadira pulled her up from the floor, and Alisha, still wet, threw herself into Nadira's arms. Do I really look so awful? she sobbed. Am I only beautiful in Peridëis? In reality, just a neuter? My breasts are like a plastic doll's!

Nadira gave her time to cry it out. But finally, she said: I'll show you something. I have a camera. Stand by the wall; I'll take a picture.

Why? Alisha asked.

When you arrived by plane, we took a photo of you after you undressed. It's my own idea, meant for this moment. I'll take a new photo now, and we'll compare them. You'll be amazed, I promise.

Alisha stood naked by the wall. Nadira looked through her camera, giving instructions on how to pose. It took a few moments until Nadira was satisfied. She pressed the shutter. Moments later, the photo slid out. Nadira waved it back

and forth, and the image gradually appeared. Nadira had photographed only Alisha's breasts. More precisely: from neck to navel. When the image was fully developed, Nadira pulled another device from her bag, looking like a camera. She inserted the new photo into it. Nadira peered through the second device's lens for a while, sliding a lever back and forth, then smiled. Look! she said, holding the box out to Alisha.
Alisha didn't know what to expect. She wasn't in the best shape. She held the box to her eye.
It took her a moment to understand.
Nadira said behind her: You're looking through a slide of the photo I took at the airport, overlaid on the one I just took. That's you and you, ten days apart. Compare the breasts!
Alisha was stunned. Those are my breasts? … But they're so much bigger… now.
They're not *as* splendid as in Peridëis, Nadira said. After all, only ten days have passed here. Still, you see there's been a visible change in such a short time. The breasts you had in Peridëis, you can nearly achieve here too. Not quite, but almost. Enough to be satisfied. With milk in them. If you return to Peridëis like this, you'll have lots of milk again in no time.
What if I went back right now?
Your breasts would still be gone. You start again in your current state.
But why wasn't it like that at the other transitions we passed through?
How far and how long were you out there?
Not much. Once maybe fifty meters, the other time… a hundred or two hundred meters. Both times maybe half an hour, I don't know exactly. Maybe less.
It's like the difference between "pause" and "stop" on a tape recorder, you know? But you can't overdo it, because it's not always clear how long Peridëis still holds you spatially and temporally.
Yes, Alisha said. The two overlaid images had somewhat reconciled her.
Come, there's breakfast, Nadira said. With coffee. Let's eat naked. To celebrate Peridëis. She stripped naked and even loosened her tightly pinned-back hair. Alisha was delighted by this.

The doctor Nadira helped Alisha in every way imaginable to overcome the blues of the first days and continue building up her breasts. Alisha had regained her body as it was when she entered Peridëis. But Nadira's trick was that between the first photo at the airport and her current real state lay those breast massages Tim had given during the desert drive through the Sahara. The photos thus showed how Alisha's breasts had already changed in the other world. This gave Alisha strength, as she had proof of her own abilities without Peridëis, plus the physical experience and inner feeling that her breasts were actually quite different. And Alisha fundamentally had a good relationship with her breasts, having long

discovered them as a source of secret pleasure. So Nadira had an easy time with Alisha's breasts, and Alisha eagerly performed the exercises Nadira taught her to most effectively coax milk from them, so they craved producing even more between sessions. Nadira also reminded Alisha that her period would resume here in the other world (exceptions prove the rule) and that she had to remember she could get pregnant again. Nadira gave Alisha a pill that wouldn't affect milk production. *One* pack—she'd get more in Berlin. To start on the first day of her next period.

On the third day, Alisha was herself again, save for a few minor hiccups, and Nadira announced her remaining vacation—the one she'd actually booked. But don't worry, I'm not sending you off without a farewell, Nadira said. First, there's a little goodbye dinner with guests.

What guests? Alisha asked, curious.

You'll see, Nadira said. Some are people you know.

Now Alisha was even more curious.

Nadira brought a selection of clothes to the hotel room. All new *Western* items, coveted back home and well-fitted. Alisha dressed and twirled in front of the mirror. And yet… the clothes were nice but ordinary. In Peridëis, she'd worn a splendid dress. And bared her breasts. She'd relished men gazing at them. Like a dazzling butterfly, drawing eyes with mesmerizing wing patterns. Alisha had read once that women in a besieged medieval city suddenly bared their breasts before the enemy, unable to explain why. They just did, and such spontaneous acts had been observed throughout history, worldwide. No one had a solid explanation for why women sometimes did this in such moments. Perhaps because they did it for varied reasons—mocking, appeasing, pleading, startling, disarming, persuading, or subtly influencing—making a single explanation impossible. Apparently, breasts did something primal to men. Like hypnosis? Now, Alisha's breasts were hidden under two firm layers of fabric. Concealed femininity is to women what bound hands are to men, she thought. She felt like a butterfly with folded wings. The hypnotic eyes were blindfolded. It didn't blind her, but a vital weapon was missing. You didn't just talk, negotiate, argue, or soothe with your mouth—you did it with your body too. Humans weren't polished, sterile calculators ticking through punch cards, though some came close. Not Alisha. Still… would men rather mount a mountain goat or a polished calculator? That thought cheered her up a bit.

Nadira and Alisha left the building with the hotel room but stayed within the resort. At the garden's edge, behind a lovely mosaic-tiled fountain, stood a separate building with large windows. A sort of restaurant or café. It wasn't big, essentially just one room. Outside stood two splendidly dressed Arabs with large golden sabers.

Those honor guards aren't just for show, Nadira said. They're actually bailiffs, ensuring we're not overheard. This way, we can speak openly for the next two or three hours without worry.
They passed the guards, who saluted with their golden sabers. Alisha was thrilled. Then she entered the small building behind the fountain and the two Arab honor guards, who were really bailiffs.
Inside, people sat at a round table. Alisha recognized them immediately, despite their street clothes making them look like tourists from around the world. They were the ones who'd received her after her flight to Algeria at that remote airport. The *commission*. Three men and a woman, three of whom had worn—no… recently… lab coats. Two chairs were empty, one for the second woman, Nadira, and one for Alisha.
Good heavens, it felt like an eternity since Alisha had landed at that strange airport.
She remembered the man with the impressive full beard, who wasn't a doctor, especially well. Once Alisha was successfully coaxed to sit, he asked: Do you regret anything? Or regret not doing something?
No, Alisha laughed, her low now truly behind her. It was wonderful, and I regret nothing. Thank you.
Hard to believe, the bearded man said. That's boring. There must be something?
Alisha pondered. There was something: She recounted her encounters with the witch, Rapunzel, and Mother Holle, asking: Why was it so goofy? I love fairy tales, she said. I swoon over them. So why didn't I experience them as I know them? Or as I'd wish them, fully fleshed out?
Now the woman who wasn't a doctor, who'd sat at the podium table, answered: It was your first time in Peridëis. It'd be concerning if your psyche just let go completely. What you experienced was a mix of the familiar and the new, curiosity and inhibitions together, maybe a bit of fear, and you saw the result. A somewhat censored version, leaving mental room for escape and distance. That ridicule probably fits in there.
Hm, Alisha said. Sometimes, when we sang songs in the youth congregation and it was really beautiful, some started clowning around, ruining the mood. I didn't want that—I loved the singing—but I ended up clowning too. I didn't know how to handle it. But it was a shame, really.
Yes, the non-doctor woman said, that's exactly what I meant. But next time, it could be different, especially without others' control or pressure. You have time to process, and it's not unhealthy to let it sink in slowly. You orient yourself in what's familiar. In a totally unknown setting, you might feel helpless. That can scare you or at least unsettle you. So you experienced a compromise, and honestly, I found your adventures fascinating. No one changes their worldview radically overnight—it takes time. Anyone claiming otherwise, I'd distrust.

Anyone doing it often just changes the facade, not the core. New paint and packaging aren't new contents. So: all good.

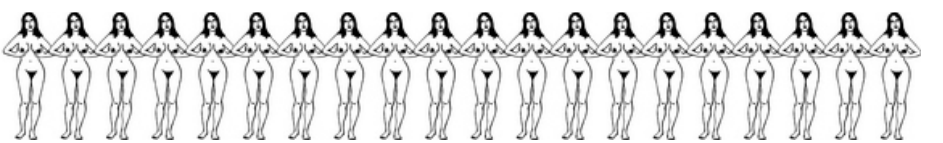
Alisha had a ton of questions, got a ton of answers, and was repeatedly reminded that people speak different languages, as she learned they had to find people who spoke German just for her. But oddly, not every question had an answer; much remained, well… how do scientists put it… super-random and couldn't be explained by hallucinations or the like. Not entirely straightforward, anyway. But sometimes connections are so terribly tangled that, due to our own limitations, we resort to the word "miracle."
At the end of the evening, Nadira gave Alisha a lovely Peridëis dress in an Oriental style, with bared breasts, as it should be. Alisha was thrilled about the dress. Nadira quipped that she was only giving it now so Alisha wouldn't wear it immediately, since they were in the middle of an Arab city. And laughed.
By the way, how do I explain the bared breasts at home? Alisha asked.
Let's say a blouse goes underneath, Nadira replied, and let's also say it's a harem dress. That's perfectly permissible under local legal norms, so we can define it as such. No need to fib. The dress was made here, of course, and that's roughly the explanation given to the tailor.
Don't people here refuse to make such things? Alisha asked.
No, Nadira said. You only have to cover up outside the family, and for your husband's eyes, provocative lingerie is absolutely allowed, even if it's *very* provocative. Otherwise, the dress is also called a "Minoan dress" elsewhere, after the Bronze Age culture on modern Crete, where statues of women in such dresses were found. Some call it the "O dress" or "dress of the O."
Because of that woman depicted everywhere in Peridëis? The one offering her breasts with her hands, her legs forming an "O"?
No, Nadira said. First, tailors cave when they see money. But besides that: unless… there's a French book where a modern woman voluntarily enslaves herself for love of a man. And gets whipped and raped. The women in that book wear such dresses too, and the woman was always just called "O," without explaining why.
Did the author know Peridëis? Alisha asked.
Who knows? Nadira said. The author isn't definitively known. It's likely a woman, and there's a guess who. If you meet her in Peridëis, ask her and let me know. That sort of thing interests me.
Finally, they all discussed what story Alisha should tell: Mistakenly put on the wrong plane, ten not-boring days elsewhere, and now with the tour group. Done. That should suffice.

Since time was pressing, Alisha was to be taken to the airport by Nadira that same

day to join her “real” tour group, ensuring she had a “real” trip with “real” experiences that would withstand scrutiny and avoid questions.
As Alisha left the hotel, a small, colorful, jester-capped figure with jingling bells darted past her.
Finally! She’s wearing a bra! it squeaked.
I’ll stuff that bra in your cheeky mouth! Alisha shouted angrily, trying to grab the figure.
Screeching, the figure fled.
Did you say something? Nadira asked, momentarily distracted.
No, nothing, Alisha said. Just cursing the bra.
Take heart, Nadira said. I have to wear the breast-squeezer here too. By the way… you might have minor hallucinations at first. Did you just have one?
Yes.
It’ll pass.
At the airport, Nadira proverbially vanished into thin air.

Alisha’s tour group from the GDR workers’ and peasants’ state was, as expected, fairly average in its quota makeup: a few real workers for the stats, a few pseudo-workers like Alisha (construction workers with high school diplomas), a few office workers, and a few party workers, aka functionaries, who’d finagled the trip through connections. But they didn’t ruin the trip, and Alisha enjoyed ten more fun and interesting days in Algeria. Everyone sincerely apologized to Alisha for the “mistake” of the wrong flight, but they were far more eager to tell her what they’d experienced.
At the trip’s end, Alisha got a real surprise: not a single group member defected to the West. She hadn’t expected that. It couldn’t be the group’s makeup—aside from the functionaries, they were normal young people like her. Maybe a sliver of freedom and a dash of cream and glitter tipped the scales toward the familiar. Normal people aren’t revolutionaries—that’s often forgotten.

And then it went *Boom!* when Alisha was back home in Berlin. Not really *Boom!* But the drab gray-on-gray greeted her with a thunderclap as she took the S-Bahn from the airport in south Berlin to Prenzlauer Berg in the north. Passing through Schöneweide district, which her father always called Schweineöde. Which is a typical Berlin pun, because “Schöne Weide” means beautiful grassland, while “Schweine-Öde” means pig wasteland.



Back Home

Summer was far from over, and Berlin's Prenzlauer Berg was sweltering. Right under the roof, with the large window basking in sunlight, the heat was doubly intense. One should really head to a lake, but Alisha only did that on weekdays. It was the weekend now, and crowds piled up at the lake—definitely not her thing. Alisha had thrown on a light men's nightshirt, occasionally sprinkling it with water. Such old nightshirts were precious, as with a few stitches, fabric dye, and some embellishments, they could be turned into stylish summer dresses. A veritable hunt for these nightshirts had taken place, and surely not a single one remained in any local wardrobe that hadn't been snatched, stolen, sweet-talked away, or otherwise pried from its original owner and repurposed. But this nightshirt was too worn for that, so it served Alisha as a heat shirt. She'd gotten the idea in Algeria. Many men there wore similar shirts, and they knew a thing or two about dressing for intense heat. That a woman could avoid moths in a thick *black* cloak under blazing sun could only mean moths died in such conditions. The light, loose shirt was fantastic, and Alisha wore nothing underneath (unlike, surely, the Algerian men). In Algeria, a man had once asked why she, as a woman, dressed so lightly, saying it was improper and risky. She'd replied that Northerners suffered far more in great heat than Southerners. He found that reasonable and had no further objections. What Alisha didn't say was that she'd have preferred to wear even less. Granted, clothing protected against direct sunlight. But otherwise, in scorching heat, its only advantage was that you could wet it.

Now Alisha sat at her desk by the window, propping her face with both hands, gazing at the lush green chestnut tree, its crown level with the window like a giant green shrub. Peridëis lingered like an intense dream. When she first woke in her own apartment, she'd feared it might have been just a dream. Not really, but if someone had slipped an unknown potent drug into her food, such a dream might've happened.

But there was the centimeter-sized, pretty fool's gold cube on the table before her. And there was the beautiful Peridëis dress, hanging prominently on a hanger. As wall decor. She'd keep it there, so every visitor saw it left the breasts bare. Harem dress sounded good as an explanation and evoked exactly the feeling Alisha associated with it.

And there was her passport, also on the desk. The stamps inside proved she'd been in Algeria.

Tim would surely visit her. Alisha knew it. No doubt. Or was there?
Just to be safe, she'd drawn the street she'd seen from the cellar. With great care, including every detail she could recall—trees, windows, streetlights, cars, a broken front door, and such. The drawing hung on the wall. But she wouldn't go searching for the bar. She'd only wandered streets she hadn't been to before, keeping her eyes open. That wasn't searching.
And yet. Was Tim a mirage? You didn't just get handed a man like that. Normally. Her? Alisha? Of all people?
Then an idea struck her. She took off the nightshirt and examined it. What if Tim showed up right now? And she was sitting in this ratty thing? The color could stay. White was fine. A cord at the waist would be little work and accentuate her hips and rear. No, not a cord. Not in this heat. But gathering the fabric above the chest would highlight her breasts, making them seem fuller without losing the dress's airiness. Some lace sewn on—she had plenty in her sewing kit. And while she was at it, she could make the breasts more accessible. Fully baring them like in Peridëis dresses wouldn't do. The heat dress's sole purpose was the unavoidable covering of the body.
But how to make the breasts easily accessible? The idea excited Alisha, especially since she wanted to maintain her milk flow, with good results. It was simply pleasurable to give her breasts attention. Hm. A simple horizontal slit at breast height would be too obvious. But a larger breast opening with an overlapping fabric layer, like a skirt, would work. Opaque from the front, accessible from below. Alisha sketched a design and set to work with zeal. This was finally a worthwhile task.
Two or three hours later, she had a result worth seeing. Oops, there was a hole to mend. But after that… the effort paid off. This wasn't a nightshirt; it was a house dress. She slipped it on, admired herself in the mirror, and was pleased.
And now?
Alisha sat at her desk by the window again, propping her face with both hands, gazing at the lush green chestnut tree, its crown level with the window like a giant green shrub. Peridëis lingered like an intense dream.

Rrrrrring.
The doorbell rang.
Alisha's heart pounded in her throat. She raced to the door.

Tim stood beaming at the door. Alisha burst into tears, threw herself around his neck, and clung to him with arms and legs, ensuring he wouldn't vanish again.
Let me breathe, Tim laughed. And I brought gifts. Since Alisha wouldn't let go, he grabbed his bag from the floor with her still clinging to him, stepped into the apartment, and kicked the door shut.

So they stood in Alisha's kitchen-living room. And Alisha still pressed herself against Tim. As tightly as she could. Her legs still wrapped firmly around him. And Tim held her close.
Got any coffee? Tim finally asked.
I do! Alisha cried, detaching herself and whirling to the stove to boil water.
Wait! Gift number one, Tim said. My official secret bread-giver has shops with upscale stuff. And then I thought from milk to cream, from cream to coffee cream, and from coffee cream to the idea that you might use a coffee machine. A small compensation for the liters of drink that flowed from you to me.
Tim rummaged in his bag and carefully unpacked a box from inside.
The machine's been personally tested by me, cleaned with boiling water, and prepped for use, he said. I brought a supply of coffee filters too.
Alisha was delighted: I didn't even know we had decent coffee machines here, she said. Ones like this I only know from people with Western connections.
Tim helped her set up the coffee and placed a packet of coffee on the table, brought just in case. But it went into reserve—Alisha had her own.
I brought cake too, Tim said.
Alisha fetched plates and cutlery.
And a little flower, Tim said.
Well… the flower looked a bit sad—due to thermal and mechanical stress and hydrological neglect, but Alisha comforted Tim: I'll press the flower and put it behind glass.
Then the coffee was ready.
Milk? Wait! I've got my own! Alisha said. This was *the* chance to show off her dress. She pulled out her breast, finally feeling again as she had in Peridëis. She quickly covered Tim's obvious arousal by eagerly leaning over his cup and milking her breasts into it. Sadly, it only half-worked. The milk sprays looked pretty but, honestly, were less plentiful than she'd hoped.
Tim gracefully defused the tension: You're too excited for your milk to flow well now. Your dress is a brilliant idea and looks great, by the way. But save your sweet milk for later. The coffee's fine with cow's milk, if you've got any.
Alisha's face burned, not just from Tim's praise for the dress but from a deeper message: it would continue, he was hers, and later she'd have him physically. Not in her loins, which had just reclaimed their power over her, but at her breast. And that could be as ravishingly intimate as many never experienced in a fling. She was getting more than some wives got from their husbands…
Alisha had cow's milk and poured it into Tim's coffee. Thank goodness he'd smoothly bailed her out.
They sat across from each other. On chairs at an angle by the desk, as Alisha had no armchairs or other table.
Nice to see you again, Tim said.

Nice to have you back, Alisha said.
You look good, Tim said.
Thanks, Alisha said. Despite my girlish breasts? And the scar? And the stupid hairstyle? And so on?
Pull your breasts out again, like before? Those aren't girlish anymore—they're womanly, with much more to catch the eye than virgin breasts.
The fabric layer over Alisha's breasts kept slipping down, but a knotted thread fixed it.
Alisha studied Tim. His clothes and haircut, honestly, didn't look good. She told him so.
Stasi-standard-issue look, Tim replied. I can't show up looking any old way, or I'd get chewed out. Short hair and bourgeois clothes are the deal. Many even come in those ugly suits with shirts and ties. What I'm wearing is pushing it.
Sorry, Alisha said. I just thought… since you're not in uniform. What about your free time? Maybe I could take you under my wing, Alisha said. I can sew. Right now, even. Want to?
Is there any hope with this stuff? Tim doubted.
Sometimes a little tailoring can do wonders, Alisha said. Do you really like my dress?
Yes, a lot. But now… I'd honestly rather see you completely naked.
That remark sent a thrill to Alisha's toes. She gained courage, and above all, a mood akin to Peridëis returned. She stood, pulled the dress over her head, and let it fall to the floor. Then she moved her chair to face Tim directly, resting her bent legs on his thighs. He was hers. She was allowed.
They ate the brought cake, drank the coffee, and Tim, without hiding his gaze, looked at Alisha's breasts and her openly displayed vulva, now very (!) swollen and very (!) wet. And slightly parted, given how she sat. There was nothing to hide, and Alisha knew what she was offering Tim. There are degrees of vulvar arousal. This was the peak, where the opening is soaked with abundant slickness. It needed a beautiful word, Alisha thought, for something that doesn't just flow away, a bit like jam or ambrosia. Why was there no good word for it??? That's how Alisha showed Tim her vulva. And he didn't look away.
You're not looking away, Alisha said softly. Are you allowed to…?
No, I'm not allowed, Tim said. But I want at least the pleasure of looking. Another bailiff told me it's undetectable afterward if I come on my own, you know? And I'm kind of hoping that happens. I feel… well… aroused enough that it might… with you… depending…
I'll help you, Alisha whispered, interrupting him and rising slowly. I want to be your temptress, heating you up and seducing you. Wait!
One thing, Tim said quickly. You're highly fertile right now. If it happens to me… don't press your vagina over my penis. Promise?

I promise, Alisha said. Stay dressed. I'll gladly wash your briefs if… it happens.
Alisha darted to her cassette recorder. An old clunker that warbled a bit, but it didn't matter now. She rifled through her cassette box. She had music that built beautifully, with a rhythm that, with a touch of imagination, sounded like sex. Alisha slid the cassette into the player and pressed start. It began. She'd danced to it often. She pulled a silk scarf from the depths of her wardrobe. The rhythm kicked in. Alisha moved to the beat, hips swaying, circling slowly forward and back, stroking her thighs, tossing her hair. Her tongue glided over her lips, her gaze turned dreamy, lascivious, demanding desire. She danced toward Tim, spun, showed her rear, swayed it, bent low, playfully parted her vulva, rose again. She twirled, presented her breasts, made them quiver, sprayed a tiny bit of milk in Tim's face, and let him smell her armpits and vulva repeatedly. She drew the scarf under her breasts, covered herself with it, whirled it around, held it like a veil before her face. She played with the scarf in a thousand ways, pressed it into her loins, held it to Tim's nose. Then Alisha turned the recorder down a bit and, while dancing slowly, began telling Tim things that happened during sex. And things about her body. Dirty things. Secret things.
Tim sat rigid in his chair, staring at Alisha. His breath came in gasps. His gaze seemed vacant, yet he was looking at Alisha. Alisha's body.
Alisha saw what Tim's absent gaze latched onto and offered him that part of her body. When his gaze shifted, she offered another part. She did it instinctively, drawing herself into him, wanting to possess him, to grasp his desire, to give him what he needed right then. She noticed which of her words had a special effect on Tim and repeated them. Again. And again. It wasn't about logic. It wasn't about reason. It wasn't about language. It was about impact. Purely impact. So it was half-sentences, blurted words. She named body parts, named them suggestively, made half-sentences describing single acts, repeated those too. She brushed her nipples across his face, came close, and made panting, jerky hip movements back and forth—yearning for nothing more than Tim's release.
Sweat poured down Tim's face; he breathed like a man possessed.
…yet he didn't come. He just couldn't. It didn't cross that crucial threshold, the magical saddle point where you're carried forward on your own.
Alisha couldn't bear it and threw herself, naked as she was, into Tim's arms. Doesn't matter, she whispered, doesn't matter, doesn't matter. Maybe it needs regularity, repetition. You know? When you're allowed again, it'll be different. Take it into your dreams. And when you dream of me, you'll spill, right?
Alisha covered the utterly exhausted Tim with kisses. Then she pulled herself up and said: Come! Come with me! Drink my sweet milk to strengthen you.
Alisha pulled Tim to her bed. A wide marital bed, built from scavenged wooden beer crates below and a large mattress above, but it looked good and slept wonderfully. Alisha pushed Tim onto the bed and climbed over his face, giving

him another fine view of her swollen, wet vulva.
Now Alisha lay beside Tim on the bed, one arm stretched far above her head, while with her free hand she took a breast and teased his lips with the nipple. Automatically, Tim opened his mouth, and Alisha slipped her breast inside. Tim began to drink, slowly sensing where the breast wanted stimulation to yield its milk. It took a moment for Alisha's milk glands to respond. Finally, her breast softened. Tim, whose mouth movements had been searching, arousing but not truly suckling, found the right position and began to suck more steadily. Then came the familiar tugging deep in Alisha's breast, the pressure, and she sighed. She helped with her hand, pressing the surging milk into Tim's mouth. And Tim shifted to long, deep sucking motions. Alisha felt the faint flow. Sighing, she let her body's tension go and sank into the mattress. Relaxation washed over her. A wave of love for Tim flooded her. Her lips rested on his forehead. She let the suckling happen, still saw his nose nestled in her armpit, thought briefly that she should skip deodorant, and finally surrendered to the intimacy of nursing. Hm, nursing? Did that fit? she wondered faintly. It didn't feel like feeding a baby. Never had. Soothing? Satisfying? You say "satisfy hunger" or "meet needs." Oof. That was party politics—don't think about that now. But as the sensations in her breasts surged, politics had no chance and vanished from her mind. Alisha offered Tim her other breast with her hand, as it demanded its due. Nursing isn't so bad, she thought. Bribery… intoxication… Yes, that felt good; she was giving him a drug, a potent drug… This potent drug came only from her body. It made him need her, unable to leave… Bound to her… She'd hooked him… And now this desirable man had to stay with her. Protect her… Make her happy… Alisha slipped into a trance that lasted until Tim had drunk her breasts dry.
He pulled back. Pleasure yourself! he urged her softly.
Am I allowed? Alisha asked, unsure. She didn't want to torment Tim.
Yes, Tim said. I find it beautiful and love watching you.
Alisha rolled onto her back, her hands drifting to her vulva. With her left hand, she parted her labia and began vibrating her clitoris with her right. Sometimes she used spit to help, but today it was utterly unnecessary. She only needed to rise from her current state to orgasm. It wasn't much. The wave of arousal built slowly. Now she felt both of Tim's hands on her breasts. They took her nipples, reached deep into the breasts, and began expertly milking them, alternating left-right-left-right, over and over. The hands gripped firmly—not gentle anymore. But it was exactly right. Milk sprayed in high arcs, falling back on Alisha in a fine, faintly cool rain. Pleasant in this heat, though she needed a moment to adjust. For a second, Alisha was distracted. But Tim's milking was relentless, unpausing, refusing to let her lose her arousal. It insistently drew the center of her pleasure toward it. Alisha's fingers flickered faster. But really, her fingers only assisted—the main sensation came from her breasts, where Tim's hands worked

their fierce magic. Alisha slowed her flickering to test it, staying near her clitoris. Would it work? … It did. Her finger only tapped the little bud occasionally, but the overwhelming sensation came solely from her breasts. Could she do it? Just through her breasts? Alisha slowly, very slowly, moved her hand away. Don't change a thing. Right-left-right-left. Tim tugged at her nipples, wrung, milked, gripped deep—goodness, that there was still milk. Milk ran from Alisha's navel down her hips. Now came the great wave. Unstoppable. She had no control. It surged toward her. She was at its mercy. Triggered only by her breasts. But rising from her loins. The wave swelled slowly but steadily, growing into a massive tide, higher, higher, higher, yes, finally:
Yesssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssss…
Alisha arched, an immense rapture coursing through her from hair tips to furthest toe, tears of joy bursting forth—and then she collapsed into deep relaxation.

Far off, she felt Tim's slow stroking. Far off, she heard the city's sounds. Far off, she heard birds chirping in the chestnut tree. She was herself, her body was her body. Far off, she felt what her body felt. That wasn't her. She was the rapture. The cloud. She floated. Bodiless. Pure lust. Tim sat half-upright beside her, likely using the moment's mood to let his hands do as they pleased. Right now, they wanted to grip Alisha's breast. His hands coaxed a squirt of milk with a deft grip. It happened slowly. Less sexual now, more pleasant. Yes, pleasant. Tim's hand roamed slowly around her breast, massaging it. Deep under the armpit. Up toward the shoulder. Gripped gently. Shook it lightly. All very slow. Now he drew another squirt of milk, spreading it like cream on her skin.
All very pleasant.
Eventually, Alisha emerged from her daze. Coffee! she growled. I absolutely want another coffee now. Will you make one?
No.
What? Why?
If you make it, I can watch you move.
Haven't you had enough? Alisha smiled at him.
Sadly, no. And I can never get enough of watching you.
You'll have to wait a bit.

Some time passed.
More time passed.

Now I'll make coffee, Alisha said, springing up.
A kitchen-living room has its perks. For instance, a man can watch a naked woman make coffee from the bed. Her rear as she stands, her swaying breasts when she turns sideways, her swinging breasts when she leans forward. It thrilled

Tim immensely.
Eventually, the coffee was ready, and Alisha returned to the big bed with two cups. You couldn't lean against the wall, as a large bookshelf stood there. More precisely, stolen wooden beer crates stacked vertically as a bookshelf. But you could lean sideways and sit facing each other, because a frame of more pilfered beer crates was screwed or nailed to the bed's wall side, propped with cushions. It might sound uncomfortable, but it wasn't—Alisha had little money but plenty of ideas and taste. And no guilt, since two guys had stolen and hauled up the crates, earning trendy pants in return, once shoddily cut East German trousers from the *Konsument* department store. That's how it worked: labor you didn't enjoy swapped for labor you did. The guys had eagerly built the bed after Alisha shared her ideas, swearing they'd make one themselves. They'd better hurry, though—the state-owned beverage trade was gradually replacing wooden crates with modern plastic ones.
Halfway through their coffee, Alisha asked mischievously: You said gift*s*, plural?
I did! Tim said. Wait! He jumped up to grab his bag.
Hey? Alisha asked.
Yeah?
Will you undress now?
Gladly. Tim shed his clothes, which clung to his body, soaked with sweat.
You know, Alisha said, should I rinse your stuff quick? In this blazing sun, they'll dry in no time. Or do you…?
No, Tim said. I can stay till evening.
Longer?
Sadly, no. Not yet. That's not my call. For now, nothing can point to a connection between us.
Alisha looked a bit disappointed but pulled herself together. Hand over the clothes! she shouted. Tim tossed them to her. One round of soapy water in the big zinc pot, one of clear water, the briefs most thoroughly, given their importance, wrung out, and done. I'll hang the laundry quick, Alisha called over her shoulder, slipping on flip-flops in the hallway. Freshen up a bit meanwhile! she added.
Will do, Tim replied. Wait, you're going out of the apartment naked?
No one lives up here but me, Alisha called back, and I've got a clothesline stretched between the antennas on the roof. Flat roof—we've even had parties up there.
You're climbing onto the roof naked? Tim laughed. Man, you've got it good.
With a hop, Alisha was gone, and Tim washed at the sink.
Minutes later, Alisha was back. It's so hot up there, your stuff'll be dry in a flash, she said. Then she saw Tim had used her washcloth. It was folded over the sink's edge. Alisha picked it up and inhaled deeply through it before hanging it back on its hook. Shame, mostly her deodorant, but a faint masculine scent came through.

Now they sat on the bed again, both naked, with his bag. There was still some cold coffee, and unlike brewed coffee, filter coffee could be drunk fully without coughing.
The smaller one first, Tim said, handing Alisha several packs of *the pill*. Compliments of Nadira, the doctor, he said. They're from the West, so don't leave them lying around to avoid dumb questions. If questions come, say you lost your pills in Algeria and got these instead.
So many? And why couldn't I bring them from Algeria?
Question one: They were just nice. Generous. Or something. Question two: No need to make customs at the border curious.
Alisha saw the logic.
Nadira insists you take the pill regularly, Tim said, because women are unusually fertile for unclear reasons after a long Peridëis stay. If you miss a dose, steer clear of men for a full week.
Hm! Sure! Alisha said. Risk of wind pollination.
Exactly! Tim played along. And no bees between your legs.
Alisha took the pill boxes, got up, and put them in her desk drawer. Then she sat back with Tim on the sofa.
The second gift is bigger, Tim said.
The third!
Right, the third. Tim unpacked another box. Alisha was curious, with no clue what it could be.
Tim lifted a device from the box. An electric breast pump, he said. A prototype built by a Soviet professor with serious expertise.
Alisha laughed. So Russians are in Peridëis too?
Of course. And this pump's the best you can get. But they can't get it into mass production. There's only a small batch. To avoid dumb questions, here's the story: You've had milk in your breasts since puberty. That's plausible—it's not that rare. It's been checked, no health risk, but since it sometimes presses and leaking milk can be a hassle, blah blah blah, a kind Soviet doctor you met by chance, blah blah blah, who you told about it, blah blah blah, gave you this pump that was just gathering dust. Who the doctor was, you don't know. Where she was from, you don't know. Why she was in the GDR, you don't know. Where the pump's from, you don't know.
Blah blah blah.
Exactly, Tim laughed. Don't spin too much story, or you'll trip up. Remember: *Unknown Soviet doctor gave me breast pump*. Done. Anything else, you answer with…
I don't know.
Right. And you've always had milk, and doctors say it's harmless. What bothers

you, you pump morning and evening, sometimes more depending on your cycle. That's just how it is, done, and anything more…
I don't know.
Exactly. Tim laughed. Then he assembled the pump for Alisha, explaining how it worked, how to clean it, and so on. Alisha watched curiously.
How often should I pump? she asked.
Forget the word *should*, Tim said. Nadira said it can feel very pleasant, and you should approach it from that angle. Like treating yourself to a massage, a pleasant massage. At least twice a day would be good, 10 to 15 minutes each time. More than 30 minutes doesn't add much. Better to do it more often during the day, but not less frequently for longer, and of course, actual suckling replaces pumping. Same with hand-milking, if it takes about as long and the breast is mostly emptied.
And that keeps my milk flowing?
Exactly. Nadira gave me an extra tip. If you're planning to go to Peridëis, you can do an extra breast activation 3-5 days beforehand, if you want and have the time. Apparently, lots of women do it. A bit like getting dolled up for a night out. Tim pulled a sheet from the box, a poor-quality Ormig copy[83], typical in the GDR. The sheet read:

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BREAST ACTIVATION
=================

Mornings: 60 min. total, following schedule:
 20 min. pumping
 10 min. break
 10 min. pumping
 10 min. break
 10 min. pumping
Afterward: every 3 hrs, 15 min. pumping
Nights: if possible, 1x 15 min. pumping

Results:

- Response typically after 2-3 days
- Greatest increase by day 5
- Further slight increase up to ~day 21
```

83 Ormig – Hectography using paper stencils, special blue paper, and alcohol.

That's supposed to work well, Tim commented, lots of milk and swelling breasts. If time's tight or the breasts respond poorly, there's a switch here too.

Soviet high-tech, Tim grinned, solved entirely mechanically, but it'd make an expert's jaw drop. I unscrewed it once—there's a kind of clockwork inside and a porcelain cylinder with silver contacts. Insane, I tell you, pristine craftsmanship, every arts and crafts museum would kill for it, must've cost a fortune to make.

Alisha was interested in something else. Like Tim, she'd learned Russian in school and read: Нормальный режим – Nor-mal-niy rezh-eem, OK, *Normal operation*. But Автоматический ночной режим – Af-to-ma-tee-che-skiy noch-noy rezh-eem, *Automatic night operation*, what's that exactly?

You take an old bra, put it on, and mark where the nipples sit. Then cut a round hole there, just big enough for the pump's breast shields to fit through. The bra holds the shields, so your hands are free.

For fooling around? Alisha asked cheekily.

Why not? Tim replied. Or to read a book, drink coffee or something else, or relax and listen to music. During the day, it's convenient; at night for the automatic mode, you can't do without the bra. The idea is you attach the shields with the bra, switch the pump to automatic, and go to sleep. With the pump connected. Then it pumps every 3 hours for 15 minutes while you sleep. Like someone docking onto you at night and draining you. And you should put something underneath, as it can get messy quick.

But would a woman do that? Can you even sleep like that?

Everyone's bribable, only the price varies, says British intelligence. I'd say, if the result's worth it, why not? But you don't have to.

No, Alisha quickly backtracked, it's fine. I was just wondering aloud. I'll try it, maybe it'll even be interesting. Do they use this in clinics?

The pump's a pretty tragic story, Tim answered. Think of mothers who can't breastfeed. The professor who co-developed it was mainly thinking of mothers of preemies. They suck too weakly, so the breast doesn't respond properly. Most mothers who got this pump apparently joined in with burning zeal, and it worked great. But they can't get mass production going. Planned economy, no capacity, functionaries don't want changes, formula's already available, and so on. They built small batches out of enthusiasm, until some dumb party official only saw the paperwork and halted production and distribution. Now there's a storeroom full of these pumps gathering dust. That's how it goes. So… even if the pump looks odd and is weirdly built, you won't get anything better in the East.

Alisha asked about lots of details. She really wanted to know how the pump

worked. She wasn't generally into tech, but this pump intrigued her. Beyond the rewarding sensual side, having milk was a status thing for her. It somehow set her apart from other women, without anyone suspecting. And better breasts… some women would kill for that, the girls had joked among themselves. With raunchy side comments.

Alisha tried the pump. Yikes, pretty loud, this thing, she said. Good thing I have my own place.

Tim set the pump on the bed. It was much quieter there than on the empty beer crate where it had been before.

Alisha leaned back and closed her eyes to test it. The pumping sensation wasn't uninteresting. There was a dial to adjust suction strength. Alisha had plenty of room to increase it but found a medium pull more intriguing.

About the strength, Nadira said not to force it but to entice, Tim commented, as the pump slurped Alisha's nipples in and out, in and out.

It took a while for Alisha to get used to the pump and focus more on the sensation it created than the tech.

Hm, she said. Definitely nice that I can just lean back. But holding these breast shields is annoying.

Got an old bra you can spare?

Alisha sent Tim to the attic storage in the hallway. There, in a box, were what Alisha called "gifts with proof of origin," including bras. Yikes, some real monsters in here, Tim remarked. After much debate, they picked a bra without plastic cups. Alisha put it on—it was slightly too big ("just wait, you'll fill out over time"), but usable. She adjusted her breasts until the nipples sat right. Tim drew a circle on each cup, slightly smaller than the breast shield's neck. Alisha cut out the holes, Tim inserted the shields, and Alisha adjusted the bra again.

Tim switched the pump back on, and Alisha leaned back comfortably. Wow! It works! she exclaimed, stretching backward. Now, entertain me, she said.

Tim laughed.

The pump pumped. Wup-Pause-Wup-Pause-Wup-Pause…

There were plenty of topics. Tim spilled a ton of state secrets about his department and the compromised transition within it. And, of course, where that weird bar was, which got Alisha all excited. It was bikeable! But they'd go together, and Alisha absolutely shouldn't visit it alone. Above all, they should let some time pass before her next visit, so her psyche could catch up.

Wup-Pause-Wup-Pause-Wup-Pause-Wup. Silence.

Hey, what's with the pump? Alisha asked.

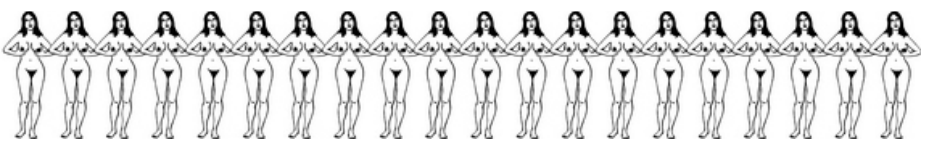
30 minutes, Tim said. Automatic shutoff. Longer doesn't help and just wears out your breast.

Shame, Alisha said. Feels good.

Check the bottles.

Not too bad at all, Alisha commented. Want to drink the milk?
I'd love a *latte macchiato*. Lots of milk, little but strong coffee. Remember—in Peridëis…
Coming right up, Alisha called, freed herself from bra and pump, took the filled milk bottles, and dashed to the coffee machine.
Mind if I try some too?
No.
Alisha got to work while Tim cleaned the pump.
Alisha served. Two cups. And what cups! They were ancient, tiny mocha cups, collector's items even, exquisitely painted and adorned with plenty of gold. Finally, these cups have a purpose, Alisha beamed.
Tim tasted first. Hmmmmmmm! he exclaimed, pure bliss. This is way better than just coffee.
Alisha sipped cautiously. She commented: Straight from the breast, I'm somehow less shy than this. Strange. It's my own, after all. She sipped again. But she refused to let Tim take her share. After finishing the cup, she said: I know exactly what you mean. And my mind knows it tastes good. Surprisingly good. But I still need to get used to it. It's kind of weird. Still, it excites me… but only if you're watching. A friend of mine is strictly vegan and always preaches against milk. Wonder what she'd say if I told her about this.
Interesting question, Tim said. Is it because she can't tolerate milk, or for animal rights?
Animal rights. She says it's exploitation.
You'd put her in a real moral bind. After all, you're doing it willingly and enjoying it. I'd love to hear her response.
Hm, tricky, Alisha said. Even the argument that it's from another species doesn't hold, since breast milk is specifically meant for humans and tailored to them. That leaves just the baby argument.
Not with the excuse that you've always had milk. Even if you induce milk for pleasure, that argument falls apart. If she tried to oblige you to donate the milk to a hospital, that'd be exploiting you.
Would I…? It would tempt me to ask. She's really nice otherwise, and she might notice my milky breasts eventually. She's already asked if they sell such, quote, huge knockers in Algeria. Got another idea what I could tell her?
Tim pondered. Maybe that you went braless in the Sahara heat, and the rubbing of your nipples against your dress probably worsened your already-existing "milk problem." That you were embarrassed to talk about it before but don't want to hide it anymore. Then you don't have to lie much. And if you say you find it exciting, it might stir less fuss than if you frame it as a burden. You know—once your reputation's shot, you live quite freely.
Probably… Alisha mused. And I'd have someone to talk to about it. Speaking of!

she added, jumping up. I've got something for you too. Nothing big, but from the heart. From the nearness of the heart, she laughed. I experimented and managed to make women's butter and milk powder from my milk for you. I thought you might like it. It's not quite as perfect as in Peridëis, sadly. Want it?
Yes! Tim said. Very much. And… I'll gladly guarantee future deliveries.
Usually, men have to pay for that? Alisha said, raising an eyebrow.
Not your own man, Tim said darkly. How convenient that you're naked.
Tim grabbed the laughing, squealing Alisha, draped her over his knee—and she got a smack on the rear.
Alisha stayed where she was. Quietly, she said: I wouldn't mind if you did that more often in the future. Here in the other world too. Have you ever tied up a woman?
No, not yet, Tim said. But I'd love to with you.
That fantasy haunts me constantly, Alisha admitted.
Do I have permission to just take you—even really… overpower you?
You do, Alisha said, swallowing. Always.
But let's save that for later, Tim said. We have a task. Afterward, we can.
Afterward, we can, Alisha echoed dreamily.



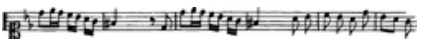
The Order

Are You Ready?

Some time later…

I've lost my period, Alisha said.
What? Tim asked, confused. Are you pregnant? But that's impossible. Or did you with someone else…
No, Alisha interrupted. Not at all. But my period's gone. Just like that. And no pregnancy in sight.
Do you think that…
Yes. Doctor Nadira told me it could happen if I'm lucky. Remember Clara in the German tavern?
Tim rolled his eyes, and Alisha laughed.
She talked about that *Glücksehe*, Marriage of Happiness. A hundred years ago. They used the husband's suckling as a contraceptive method. The basic idea was, if you nurse often and regularly enough, the period stops, and if the period stops, you're protected from conception.
But that's not a reliable method, is it?
No. First, every woman has to figure out if she responds to it, and if so, the regularity has to be there, or it fails.
And what good does that do us?
Nothing. I just said my period's gone. That's why.
…
You're supposed to praise me!
Uh, yeah. Sure. Why?
Oh, come on! I'm making an effort here, and the guy… Fine: It works for me. And I'm not mad at all about losing my period. That alone is worth it. No period pain, no…
Ohhhh.
Not just oh. If it stays like this, no period, I'm seriously considering going off the pill.
But it's still unreliable…
It at least lowers the chance of conception. That changes the pros and cons of the pill. Look, when we're allowed… we can do plenty in Peridëis. And at home… it's not just in-out-up-down, as you well know. Isn't that nice too?
Uh. Yeah.
And if it happens anyway… I mean… don't you want kids at all?

I do. Just not yet.
Thank you. Alisha kissed Tim. By the way, Nadira said the absence of periods can have long-term benefits for women.
Really? But isn't the female body built for it? Tim wondered.
Sure. But Nadira said back then, women were either pregnant, nursing, or both. They never had as many cycles as today. So, the modern normal state is unnatural, and reducing cycle frequency is a health benefit.
And no downtime every 28 days.
And no downtime, Alisha laughed. Wait till you're older—you'll regret that downtime.
Nah, we'll be living in Peridëis by then. But you—remember you're not allowed to go off the pill *yet*.
Don't worry, Alisha said. I won't go off the pill yet.
Are you ready? Tim asked.
I'm ready, Alisha said.
Really?
I'm burning for it.

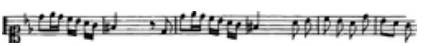


Object P

One fine Sunday morning at Object P. Captain Prillwitz was on weekend duty, alone in the facility, with no one announced and, as usual, nothing happening. He had diligently checked the lock status and seals of all gates and doors, logged it in the duty book, and was now doing a patrol. As always, he did it on foot, as everyone knew, to stay fit, and the object wasn't that big anyway. Eventually, he entered the zone… strictly speaking, unauthorized, of course, but if anyone asked, it was to check something. Just quickly. Out of a misplaced sense of duty. Naturally. That was a solid excuse.
Of course, Captain Prillwitz was drawn elsewhere. His great passion. The only thing that truly moved him… He was seriously worried about how long this could go on, as the object was slated to get a small swimming pool, four by four meters and two meters deep. A reward for outstanding performance, straight from the minister, also to compensate for the job's particular difficulties and dangers. Not bad. The question was whether it'd bring unexpected weekend visitors to the object. If so, his secret zone walks would be over. He had to see if the pool could somehow be prevented.
Captain Prillwitz unlocked the gate to the zone.
He checked once more if everything was in order behind him in the object. It was. Nothing to see, nothing to hear. All quiet. As usual.

Captain Prillwitz turned back, braced himself, and moved forward on the small, nearly invisible path through the zone toward the cellar ruin where the transition was. Anticipation surged through him. It always did when he entered the zone. A profound joy, a true fulfillment. He ducked, pushing branches aside. A small clearing appeared, still outside the actual zone, still in the safe area.
There stood a naked woman.
Captain Prillwitz blinked and stopped dead.
The woman smiled at him.
Behind her, a blanket was spread wide on the grass. She wore only shoes. Just shoes, nothing else. Light shoes.
But this naked woman with light shoes wasn't just any woman. It was that stunning woman he'd seen in Peridëis. The one he'd possessed once. Just once, but still.
And this archetype of beauty now stood naked before him.
Did Peridëis's influence reach this far? All the way here?
The beautiful woman waved to him, smiling, and said: Come!
She said no more. Just that enticing: Come!
Captain Prillwitz's mind failed him. Click, and it was gone. He was utterly helpless.
He asked, completely foolishly: What do you mean?
But again, the stunning woman only said: Come!
And stretched both arms invitingly toward him.
How beautiful she was…
Was this all just a mirage?
Captain Prillwitz took an uncertain step forward.
Once more, the beautiful woman beckoned: Come!
Now he walked toward her, unsure.
When he stood right before the stunning woman, he realized she was real. Flesh and blood. He smelled her intoxicating feminine scent, felt her hair.
…and felt her hands gently undressing him, unbuttoning his field uniform. She bent down to slip off his trousers.
The beautiful woman lay back on the blanket spread behind her. She opened her thighs. Wide. Captain Prillwitz saw her vulva come into view. He had a vision of an intoxicating scent rising from it, irresistibly drawing him in. He inhaled as much of that beguiling fragrance as he could. His legs moved on their own. Toward the beautiful woman offering herself so delectably and willingly. Captain Prillwitz fumbled with his clothes, so annoyingly in the way. He shed his trousers and briefs. Now he touched the beautiful woman. Nothing held him back. He leaned over the breathtakingly beautiful woman—and then his penis entered her. Panting, Captain Prillwitz fell into the instinctive pelvic thrusts, with only one real thought beyond the frenzy: Don't hurt this beautiful woman, this archetype of

femininity… he had to possess her. But never harm her. So he thrust again and again, and the beautiful woman smiled at him. She said nothing, did nothing, just lay there, willing, and smiled.
And finally, he came. Captain Prillwitz arched, experiencing a mind-numbingly intense climax and a feeling of profound satisfaction.
When he came to, Captain Prillwitz stood up. He looked uncertainly at the stunning apparition.
She rose too.
Now I have your seed, she said. Then she threw the blanket over herself and vanished into the bushes.
Captain Prillwitz stood stunned. What did that mean?
At that moment, a horn blared ahead.
What was going on? Captain Prillwitz panicked. What should he do? That was the alarm horn!
What to do?! Run back. The alarm was more important, and not getting caught was even more critical, or it'd all be over. He dressed as fast as he could and sprinted back to the zone's entrance gate.
At the object… nothing. Absolutely nothing. No one there, no phone ringing, no traces, nothing. Just the alarm system triggered, its signal light glowing. Maybe a false alarm. It happened, especially during storms. Whatever. He hadn't been caught.
But now what? The scare sat deep in Captain Prillwitz's neck.
For an hour, he sat staring out the window. He disabled the entrance gate's alarm and returned to the zone. He had to know what was up with that beautiful woman. Had he dreamed it? A hallucination?
Captain Prillwitz opened the zone gate. No horn sounded. No surprise—*now* he'd made sure to disable it. He walked the small path again. He hesitated before the bushes. But finally, he pushed the branches aside.
Nothing.
Meadow, bushes.
A few blades of grass looked bent. But that could've been from him. Were there other traces? No. Not definitely. The ground here was fairly moist, and trampled grass would quickly spring back. Even at the spot where the blanket had been, if it had been there, Captain Prillwitz wasn't sure if the grass showed traces or not.
So Captain Prillwitz returned, at a loss. What else could he have done? He didn't dare risk a trip to Peridëis.
Captain Prillwitz carefully locked and sealed the gate and carried out his duties by the book.



Outside

But it was Alisha, for it had indeed been Alisha, and everything had truly happened. Alisha slipped as quickly as possible to a gap in the fence, careful not to run. She held a hand between her legs. Along the way, she heard the alarm horn, as planned. Captain Prillwitz, as expected, hadn't followed her. Alisha slid through the fence gap. A few meters beyond, hidden in a bush, was a bag. Inside were tattered clothes smeared with forest soil from the area and a kind of clamp. Alisha had made and tested this clamp herself. Now she lay on the ground. She fastened the odd clamp over her labia. Its purpose was simple: her vagina was now sealed, and hopefully, nothing could leak out. Only then did Alisha put on the tattered clothes, take some forest soil from a pouch, and rub it into her hair, arms, and legs.

Then Tim appeared. He wore normal street clothes but had military boots on. Everything okay? he asked quietly.

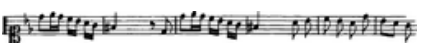
All according to plan! Alisha replied.

Tim erased traces on the ground and carefully sealed the fence gap with pliers. He also checked outside for any remaining signs.

Then they set off. But they only walked a few hundred meters until they reached a parked Wartburg, the object's service car, which by rights should've been at the nearby town's station parking lot. They got in, Tim swapped his military boots for regular street shoes, and they drove off with a muted engine. Tracks from this Wartburg in the area were unsuspicious, which was exactly why this car was ideal.

Already on the concrete slab path leading to Object P, Alisha was dropped off. A fleeting kiss, a quick *Good luck*, a few final instructions, and Tim was gone down winding paths, leaving Alisha alone on the concrete road. She started walking toward the next town, practicing like an actress to let tears flow. She hadn't wanted to use a lemon.

From a distance, the siren of a police car wailed, nee-naw-nee-naw. Alisha just remembered to remove the clamp.



Don’t Mess This Up

Captain Prillwitz sat in Berlin at the Disciplinary Department. He felt sick with fear.

What do you think we called you here for?

Captain Prillwitz feigned ignorance.

What were you doing on such-and-such a day?

Captain Prillwitz knew exactly which day it was. But if they were asking about *that* day specifically, there was a chance not everything had come out. Not what he’d done in Peridëis. But what if he was *only* transferred as punishment? That was bad enough.

He played dumb again. I think it was a weekend shift, he answered.

They danced around the issue for a while, but finally, the investigator got blunt: You left your duty object unauthorized, headed toward the next village, and raped a woman there.

Toward the next village! Captain Prillwitz was almost relieved. The zone was in the opposite direction—they knew *nothing*. He rejoiced inwardly. What was this strange rape accusation compared to that?

I didn’t rape anyone, he replied.

The investigator’s tone turned menacing, his words deliberate: We have a report from the criminal police, passed to the investigative body via the prosecutor’s office. A woman was raped on Sunday morning. No one but *you* was in the area at the time. The spontaneous description matches *you* to the smallest detail. Among later photos, *your* picture was picked. The semen from the woman’s gynecological swab matches *your* blood type exactly. I’m waiting for *your* response?

Captain Prillwitz pressed his lips together. A trap. He saw it instantly. His brain raced. If it was a trap, that lieutenant was in on it. What did they want? If he spilled, they’d be implicated too! No. They knew he couldn’t talk. He wouldn’t be off the hook either way. Quite the opposite. And if he stayed silent, at worst, after five years in prison, he’d have a real shot at returning to Peridëis. But what was the point of this stunt? The woman had given herself to him. That was a high stake.

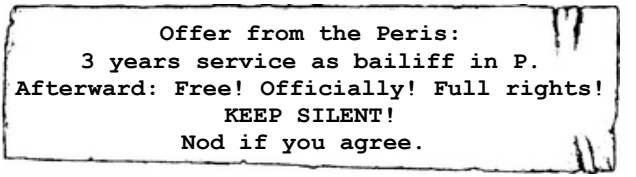
Captain Prillwitz stayed silent.

He stayed silent in his cell. He waited. Something had to come. Talking narrowed options; silence kept all doors open.

He was right. Three days later, the investigator led him to the visitor room. Your chance, he’d said, don’t mess this up.

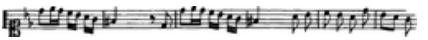
In the visitor room sat that beautiful woman. Modestly dressed. That was unusual. Still, Captain Prillwitz’s mind shut off instantly.

To his great surprise, the investigator left him alone with the beautiful woman.
The beautiful woman began to speak.
At the same time, she discreetly held out a note for him to read, previously rolled between her fingers. Captain Prillwitz read:



Captain Prillwitz's heart nearly leapt. Blood rushed to his head. He felt as free as a bird. This, *this* was what would happen now. My God, this wasn't punishment —it was salvation! He pulled himself together, tensed, showed no emotion. But he nodded very clearly.
He didn't dare raise his gaze.
Alisha spoke aloud: Your superior told me your agency deeply regrets what happened and that it will not be tolerated but harshly punished. They asked me to keep silent about the incident, as otherwise… significant state interests would be jeopardized. They asked if I'd agree to settle the matter privately for this reason. I was promised a kind of… compensation for this case. I agreed on the condition that… this incident be forgotten. Completely forgotten. That it never happened. So I'm never bothered by it again. Never, anywhere, by anyone. Understand, if I get a chance to forget, I want that chance, not to be reminded by authorities over and over. They said your punishment can't be waived, but as a compromise, I suggested you be discharged and left at that. The question for you now is whether you agree to let this incident be undone this way.
Captain Prillwitz nodded breathlessly. This couldn't be real. No one, *no one*, who'd ever started at the Ministry for State Security could just quit unscathed. It didn't exist. That path wasn't planned. Once you got closer to the *firm*, there were basically only two options: hired or locked up. Voluntary or forced, official or unofficial. That was a bit exaggerated, but it had a kernel of truth. Getting out meant finally having peace. No more fear of screwing up. He'd remained the same fool in the *firm* as he was outside. That wasn't a solution. But Peridëis was a solution. It was *the* solution. He'd have given his right arm for it.
Alisha left the visitor room without a goodbye.
Moments later, the investigator entered the room: Man, you got damn lucky! He spoke in an almost flippant tone again.
Knew it, Captain Prillwitz thought, you bastards were listening.
He just nodded.
You better have gotten it, the investigator said. Without that girl, you'd be locked up now. Hot piece, I'll give you that. But rape? No way. That's *absolutely* not on.

And during duty, that's the lowest of the low. So: You're demoted to soldier, discharged from the MfS, and dismissed. Some punishment's gotta stick. That was too much. You'll be picked up later, get a checklist, and handle the formalities. All secrecy obligations remain in place. Absolutely! You'll have a separate personnel talk for your career reorientation. You gotta be some kind of lucky to pull this off. Oh, one more thing: Your wife filed for divorce. She knows *nothing* about this mess here. Just that something happened. No details. So keep your trap shut. Seems she was just waiting for a reason. Did you know she was cheating? No? See, we know these things. She's no good, that woman, be glad you're rid of her so cheap. We'll count that as an extra penalty point checked off. Remember us fondly for it. And always keep in mind: Ask first, then fuck, not the other way around. And not on duty. Now back to your cell, and later you'll be picked up to sort out your stuff.



Free! - Mr. Prillwitz

Mr. Prillwitz worked as a martial arts trainer at a sports club. People respected his skills, off-hours were truly off, the work was easy and pleasant, and he was rid of the Stasi. Finally free of it. Of that awful mistake. To stay free, he avoided political talk like the plague. Not that he'd become an opponent. No. He just wanted nothing more to do with it. Just peace. No politics, no orders, no duties, no missions.

Today was Friday, and it was quitting time. A weekend loomed with nothing to do. No obligations, no travel restrictions, no standby. Nothing. Zilch.

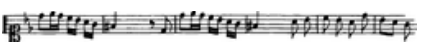
There was a knock at his office door.

Come in! he called.

And there, in the doorway, stood that unbelievable beauty.

Mr. Prillwitz paled, his mind blanking. Suddenly, a torrent of words poured out, beyond his control. Thanks were in there, that he was in her debt was in there, and then his deepest secret slipped out: how, as a chubby kid, he'd been beaten up, how he'd wanted to become a strong man to show them all, how he'd convinced himself everyone hated him because he alone upheld the pure, true doctrine.

Alisha let him finish. Revolted, but pensive. When Mr. Prillwitz had talked himself out and fell silent, drained, she said only: Do it right this time. Do this job. Do it without overdoing it, and get happy. And now, come. I'm taking you to Peridëis.



Free! - Tim

What Mr. Prillwitz didn't know was that Alisha was bringing him to the Peri as a replacement for Tim. That had been the deal with the Peri. The task she had to complete anyway was to handle the compromised transition with Tim. There were, besides the special researchers, rogue Stasi officers, the Peri had said. The additional deal was a substitute for Tim, and he would be free. No longer a bailiff. With all the rights of a visitor.

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Alisha stood in the marketplace of the Red Rose City before Tim: Take off your uniform!
Why?
Will you do it just for me?
Tim stripped. Now he stood completely naked before her.
Alisha eyed him with great relish from head to toe. Her gaze lingered below.
Tim's penis rose steeply under her stare. It looked magnificent. Incredibly stiff and robust.
Alisha tore her gaze from Tim's penis and looked up—deep into his eyes: The Peri said if I found a replacement for you, you'd be free. She just got her replacement from me.
Then let's not waste time.
They both ran off, searching for the first spot in the marketplace that would stay free long enough for Tim to spill his seed in Alisha. It was long yearned for, and now it felt like a cleansing for Alisha. They dashed to the first public lounge they found, a good one nearby. Alisha ripped her dress off. She wanted to be fully naked, just as Tim already was. She wanted to surrender to him completely bare. Alisha felt a fierce urge to be even more naked, to show Tim her arousal, to offer her swollen, dripping, wide-open sex. She sank onto the lounge, leaned back, and spread her legs as far as they could go. Wide open, she offered herself to him. Come, please, she begged, come, please come. Tim approached, the tiny moment it took almost too long. She felt his body over her, inhaled his arousing masculine scent. She almost feared something might come between them at the last second; she grabbed his stiff penis with her hand. It felt firm. Thrilling. She pulled back his foreskin completely, so it was truly bare for her, and guided the tip to the opening of her eagerly waiting vagina. It wasn't necessary—her entire loins were so wet and slick that Tim's penis would've slid in on its own. But this was sweeter, and she wanted to feel his penis with her hand, guide it into her herself.
When she positioned Tim's penis at her opening, a primal jolt surged through

him, and he thrust his swollen penis deep into her. Alisha's cries of pleasure mingled with his; she grabbed his rear and pressed hard with his rhythmic thrusts, urging his penis as deep as possible into her.

It didn't take long. A few seconds? The anticipation was too great. Alisha felt everything inside her contract, her vagina beginning to grip his penis so tightly it seemed to wring it out. For Tim, this pushed his desire over the edge—and so they both arched at the same moment, he spurting his seed deep into her in numerous pulses, she feeling the pulsing of his seed deep in her loins, with an intense desire to wring his penis with her own orgasmic waves, to claim his warm masculine seed as her rightful possession and draw it far into her body.

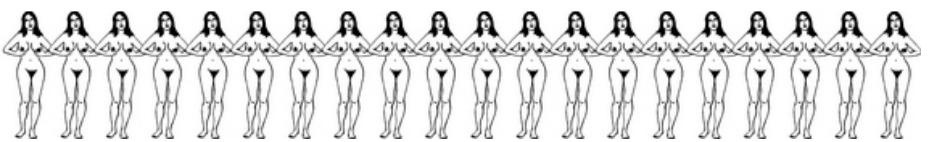
Finally.

Alisha had yearned for this so much.

And the longed-for seed flushes out the unwanted seed, she thought as she came to. Though that was nonsense—she'd thoroughly flushed her vagina right after the police medical exam. But you never know. From now on, Tim would have to step up regularly. He had hefty milk debts to settle. And someday, Alisha would convince Tim to plant a child in her outside. Someday.

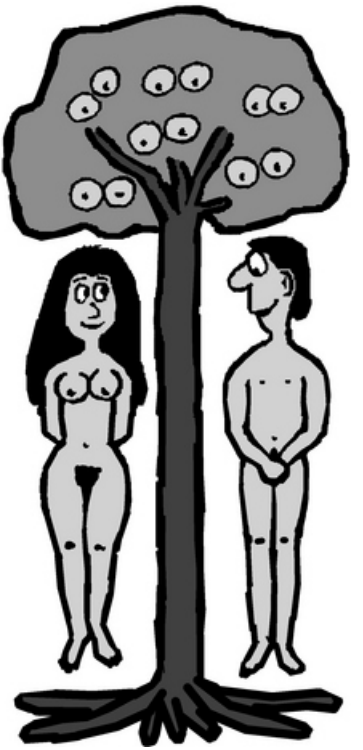
As Alisha's eyes cleared, she noticed many people watching—men and women. Clearly, they'd grasped that this wasn't everyday bliss they'd just witnessed. And they rejoiced with them.

When Tim and Alisha finally rose, her torn dress and his uniform lay discarded on the marketplace. Hand in hand, they strolled naked through the city. Somewhere, they'd use Alisha's precious breastmilk to buy the finest things Peridëis had to offer.



Poem

Paper, pinned with a thumbtack to the doorframe of Alisha's kitchen:



Apples of the paradise,
Oh great surprise,
Taste very nice.

The moral is,
(this tale's true lore)
the moralist
gets fruit no more!

THE END

hic depingitur vxor Gaynenae

Small publisher's advertising:

Published in German by the same publisher:

About one in four young fathers has drunk milk from his wife's breast multiple times, according to a British study.
This book goes further: It explores couples who have made daily breastfeeding a lasting part of their shared intimacy, entirely without an infantile backdrop—both partners retain their roles as adult lovers.
The author's investigation yields a surprising finding: the dream of breastfeeding is apparently shared by an extraordinary number of adults. Cultural history offers surprises too, from ancient Egypt through the Bible to the Virgin Mary, and even to the secret doctrine of the "Glücksehe" (Marriage of Happiness) around 1902.
And the book tackles practical questions as well: Who knows that any woman can produce milk at any time, even without giving birth, and how exactly that works?
From today back to antiquity, from biology to theology, astonishing, unknown, and forgotten insights have been uncovered.

Order directly via
Denkholz Buchmanufaktur
www.denkholz.de
or in the normal book trade.

Scientific Appendix

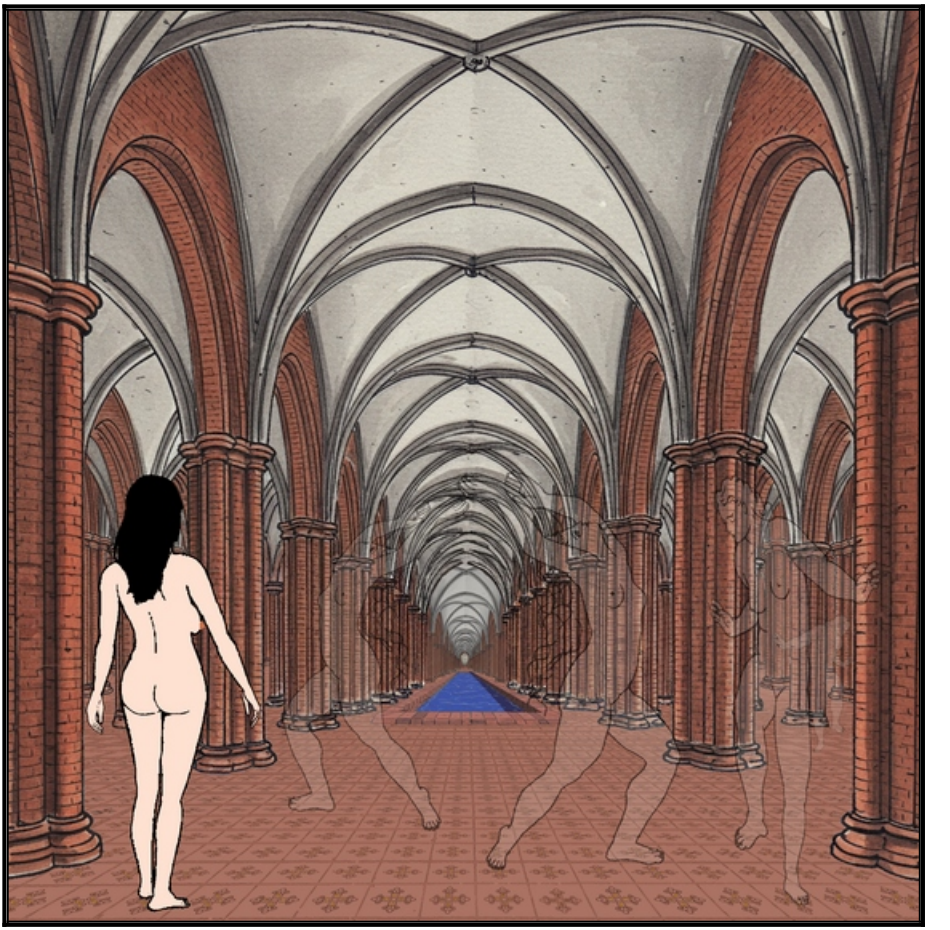
(Image Appendix)

In the course of the dissolution of the former Ministry for State Security, as is generally known, many documents were lost. The following drawings were preserved because a former Stasi officer apparently appropriated them for personal use instead of destroying them. This officer, despite extensive searches, has unfortunately remained untraceable to this day, which is all the more regrettable for research because he would have been the only accessible source of interpretation, as both the geographical location of the so-called *Object P* and all the staff involved at the time have, if you'll pardon the expression, literally vanished from the face of the earth. For the reasons mentioned, it can only be inferred from the broader context that the following drawings were created by so-called artist-IMs after their return from Peridëis, as photographic recordings were, for known reasons, not possible. This is also supported by rumors according to which one or more artist studios with exceptionally good equipment were supposedly located in the so-called *Object P*.

For the interpretation of the individual drawings, only the brief image captions provided are available, which is why the utmost restraint is required in their scholarly-historical evaluation. And finally, it must be considered that, firstly, the image collection has no connection to the coherent text of the well-known book *Peridëis*, and secondly, one cannot even be certain that the images actually form a cohesive collection. The order of the images must also be regarded as essentially arbitrary. However, it can be assumed that the story of Tim and Alisha belongs to the *known legends* among visitors to Peridëis, which essentially describes an ideal couple. This introduces uncertainties in interpretation, as one cannot assume a single narrator here, but rather mutually influencing sources and possibly the merging of several originally independent stories. It is not ruled out that the Ministry for State Security wanted to investigate potential betrayal, but it is equally conceivable that the ideal couple of Tim and Alisha was considered one of the complex phenomena of Peridëis, because if one sent their own staff there, it had to be expected that their knowledge and personality would flow into the overall world of Peridëis. And not least, the personal motives of the involved staff of the former Ministry for State Security must be considered, for objectively speaking, it is quite striking how few work results the so-called *Object P* ultimately produced. It is certainly worth asking whether the exploration of

Peridëis was deliberately sabotaged, for the secret entry into the *Operational Area P* seems to have been more the rule than the exception among the staff, and controls in this regard simply did not take place—despite the fact that entering the *Operational Area P* was strictly forbidden and it was assumed that this corrupted the staff, which is precisely why specially monitored IMs were deployed. This is one of the unresolved mysteries. Consequently, however, one must also ask the question of what, regarding Peridëis, is *not* a mystery. A final word: I dare to commit the sacrilege of naming the so-called invisible elephant in the room: *These Stasi employees <u>were</u> all corrupted!*—I am not saying that I support this conclusion. I am only saying that the question is present.

Prof. Dr. ic. R.S., ordentl. Kand. d.P. in aet.



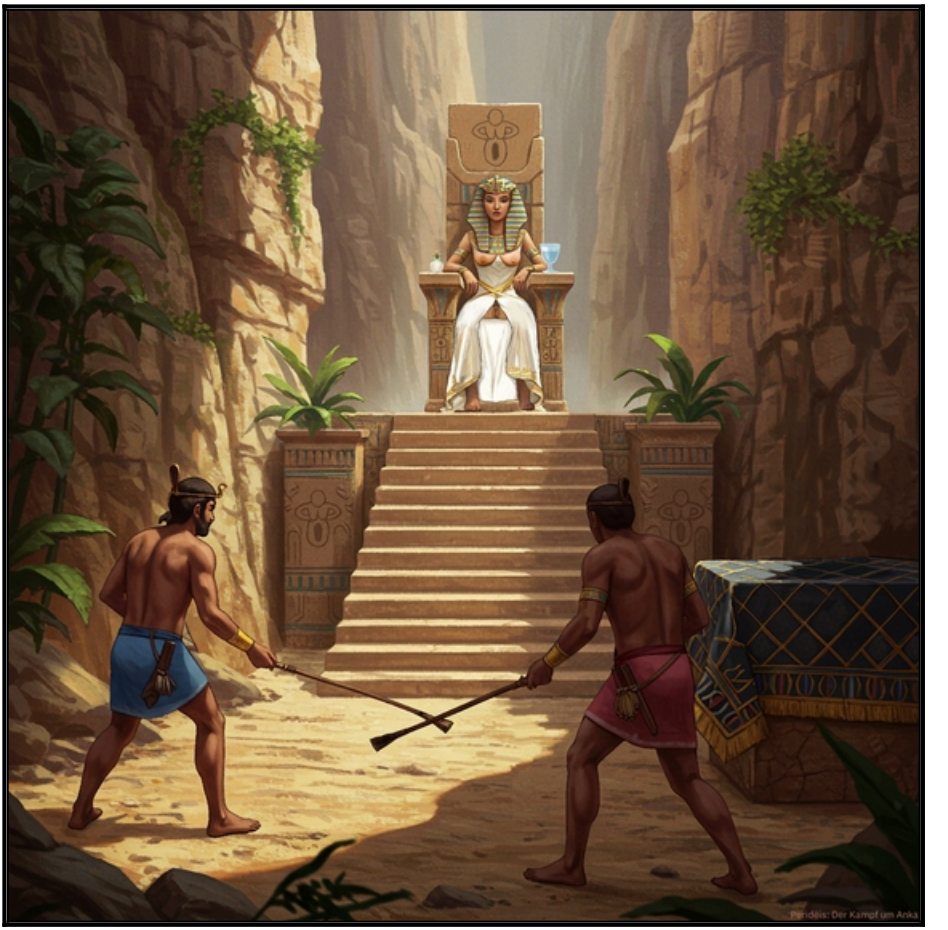
Alischa’s transition

The abandoned tavern

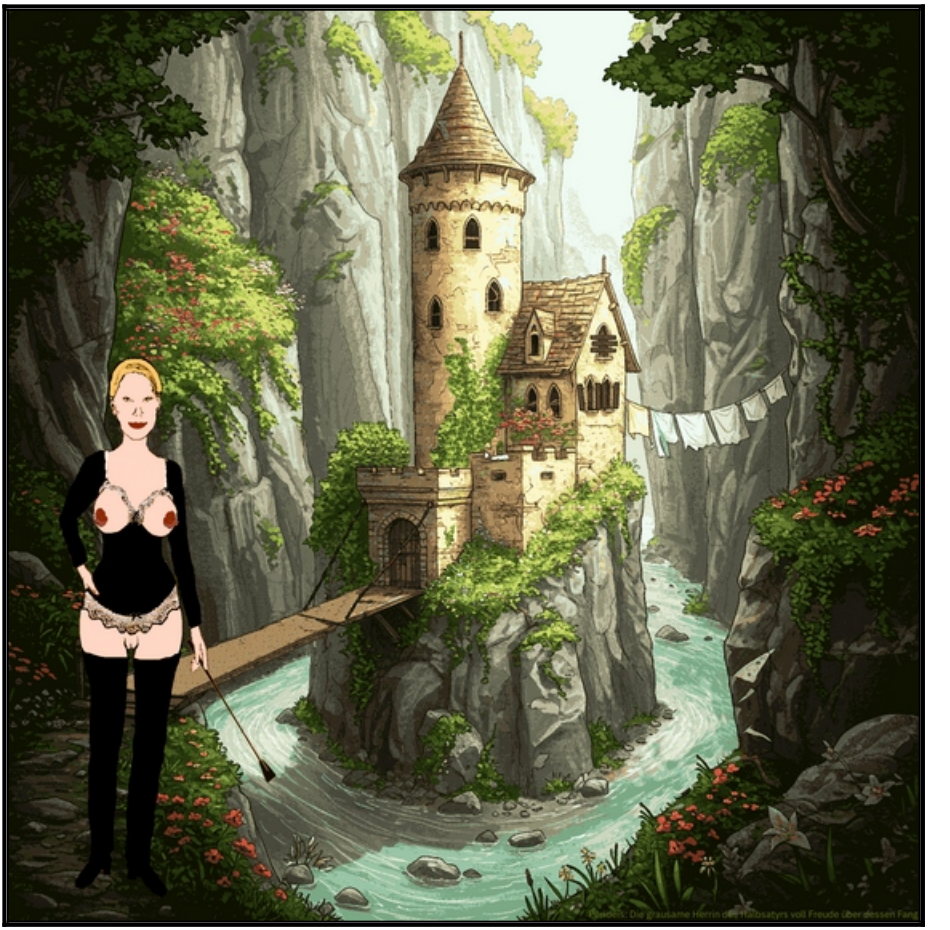
On the azure cobblestone path

The blue fish

Sunamite



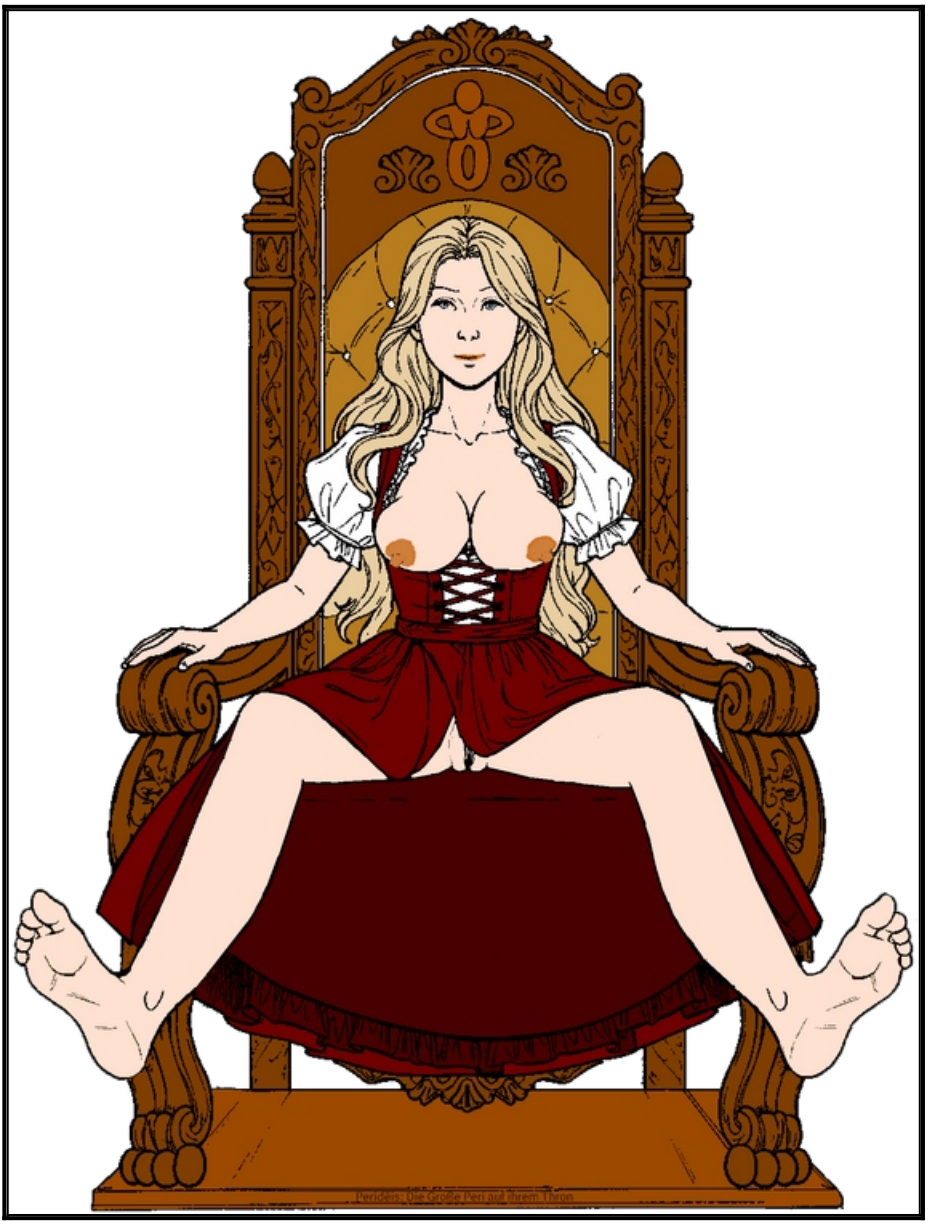
The battle for Anka



The cruel mistress of the half-satyr,
delighted by his catch

Tim and Alischa bathing

In the town – Tim drinks from Alischa's breast



The Great Peri on her throne

Payment for the purchased dress

Die Käyserin Livia ließ etliche tausend säugende Frauen auffangen / und die aus den Brüsten ihren Kindern geraubte Mutter-milch in silberne Wañen spritzen / darin sie sich / in Meinung: diese Milch würde weisser / als Esels-Milch machen / hernach gebadet hat.

"The Empress Livia caused sundry thousand nursing women to be gathered, and the mother's milk, stolen from their children's breasts, to be spurted into silver basins, wherein she thereafter bathed, deeming this milk would render her whiter than ass's milk."

Final scene

Milkmaid

The Milkmaid, oil on canvas by Leo Talberg.
After the drawing above, not contemporary.

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